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ABSTRACT

Interviews with 107 rural divorced, single mothers in 6 Pennsylvania counties examined their use of and attitudes toward community assistance programs, workfare, and educational programs. Many respondents had used welfare and nutrition programs and felt the programs were needed. However, they felt that child feeding programs were more accessible and less stigmatized than welfare or emergency programs. Only a quarter of the women had used Head Start, support groups, parenting education, money management, food education, or career development programs. Barriers to attending these programs included time constraints, location, poor transportation, fees, social stigma, and a lack of awareness of the programs. A majority felt that marriage education programs should be required to obtain a marriage license. Use of services and attitudes toward welfare and educational programs differed by income, age of children, rural/urban residence, and extent of experience with such programs. Most interviewees reported that divorce had affected their ability to feed their family. Those who had a lower income, lived alone, had less informational support, or had older children were affected more. Eleven recommendations address increasing assistance to needy single-parent families; increasing awareness of human services programs; need to change welfare staff attitudes; increasing job training and opportunities; partnerships with local agencies; involving participants in how programs are delivered; and introduction of marriage reparation classes. Contains 109 references and 26 data tables. (TD)

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Final Report Executive Summary

Single Parents' Attitudes Toward and Use of Government and Community Assistance: A Needs Assessment to Plan Interventions that Preserve Family Function and Lower the Risk of Poverty

Investigators: J. Lynne Brown, Leif Jensen and Jennifer Mastrofski

Project Working Group
Project Coordinator: Carolyn Scott
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Executive Summary

Purpose: Divorced, single mothers are at risk for needing public assistance due to reduced family income, especially if they are less educated and unskilled, and thus they may be adversely affected by Welfare reform. In an effort to understand their situation, we conducted a needs assessment of divorced, single mothers which documents their attitudes toward and use of a variety of public assistance and educational programs. We also assessed whether they feel at risk of needing these programs, their initial reactions to workfare, the educational programs of most use to them now (and how and when these should be offered), their opinions of programs to require at life cycle events, their food procurement habits, and their opinions about their own food security.

Procedures: Volunteers who had legal custody of minor children were solicited by mailing flyers to all women who were awarded divorce decrees in 1995 and 1996 in six Pennsylvania counties (Bedford, Huntingdon, Centre, Columbia, Tioga, and Bradford) matched for economic and ethnic factors. Women returning business reply postcards were screened to check the age of their children and their marital status, and that any permanent separation prior to divorce had not exceeded five years. Interviews were conducted orally in each woman's home by trained interviewers, using a previously tested interview guide that included questions with a choice of fixed answers as well as open-ended questions that required verbal replies. The interviewer recorded the respondents' answers to fixed choice questions in the interview guide and tape recorded their verbal answers. Each interview took approximately 2 to 2.5 hours to complete, and completers received a $40 grocery store gift certificate. The quantitative data from the fixed answer questions were checked to correct recording errors, coded, entered into data files, and analyzed using standard statistical procedures. The tape recorded data were transcribed into text documents which were coded for themes using a computer software program and were summarized using text retrieved by key word searches.

Results: The 107 divorced, single women, who completed these interviews, were 99% white, with a mean age of 36. Only 37% had more than a high school education, but 80% held a full or part-time job, 52% of which were blue collar or service jobs. Nearly 60% had annual incomes of less than $20,000. Over 90% of these women were permanently separated prior to divorce and had lived apart from their ex-

spouse an average of 3 years. All had children and slightly over half had several children. Nearly 70% of these women were the only adult in their household; the rest lived with other adults, and over half of these were a significant other.

The community assistance programs currently most used by these women were domestic relations (66%), Welfare (34%), Food Stamps (22%), individual and family counseling (IFC) programs (18%), and SSI (11%). The most used programs in the past were Welfare, Food Stamps, WIC, and IFC. Three quarters or more had never used SSI, rent assistance, EFNEP, Head Start, emergency food and shelter programs, children and youth services, support groups, parenting education, money management, food education, and career development programs. An analysis of willingness to use familiar programs suggested that unfamiliarity was a reason some programs were not used.

We examined the women's attitudes toward groups of programs: Welfare (general assistance, AFDC, SSI, Food Stamps, and Rent Assistance), child feeding programs (WIC, EFNEP, and Head Start), emergency programs (food banks, domestic violence shelters, and homeless shelters), and educational programs (parenting, divorce, money, and food education), using an attitude scale based on perceived access, need, stigma, and comfort in discussing use of these programs with others. These women had more positive attitudes about Welfare and child feeding programs than about emergency or educational programs. This was partially based on perceived need. Those with lower income ($20,000 or less) needed Welfare programs more than those with higher income, and those with preschool children needed child feeding programs more than those with older children. Higher income women expressed more need for educational programs. Child feeding programs were viewed as more accessible than Welfare and emergency programs, but they were neutral about education programs. Questions were asked regarding the stigma the women associated with using Welfare, child feeding programs, and emergency programs, but not educational programs. Higher income women associated the greatest stigma with Welfare programs, an intermediate level with emergency programs, and the lowest with child feeding programs. Lower income women associated the lowest stigma with child feeding programs, and similar, but lower, levels of stigma with Welfare and emergency programs, compared to higher income women. Use of a program lowered the perceived stigma associated with it. However, the stigma applied by relatives, Welfare staff, and the community made using Welfare more unpleasant, but did not deter all women in need from using it. In contrast, women's experiences with WIC were highly positive. Less stigma was associated with WIC because of eligibility rules, restrictions on voucher use, and young children being the target recipients.

Reactions to workfare differed by the women's experience and education. Current users of Welfare and those with less education were less certain they could support their children under the new rules and felt that they were more likely to face competition for local jobs. The women felt that divorced mothers needed help improving their self-esteem as well as subsidized child care, transportation, job training, and money management and parenting skills to avoid using Welfare.

From a list of 17 educational topics, the women rated financial and conflict management, parent-child communication, emotional adjustment, and community resource location programs most useful now. The age of children in the household significantly affected some ratings; those with younger children felt parent-child communication, parenting skills, choosing good child care, and food skill programs more important than those with teenagers. The most important characteristics of any educational program were arranging meeting times to fit the participant's schedule, providing practical skills for immediate use, locating the program within 10 miles of home, and the total time the program required. The most important advertising channels were the mail and sending a note home from school with their child. Women indicated that they might not attend programs because of time constraints, transportation problems, fees, location, and shame and embarrassment about seeking help.

When they were asked if any educational programs should be required in order to marry, divorce, or obtain legal custody of children, the majority of these women favored requiring educational programs (addressing communication, money management, understanding and making marriage work, and parenting skills and issues) to obtain a marriage license. More of those living alone who were better educated and separated longer felt such programs should be required. The majority did not favor requiring educational programs at the other life cycle events.

These women were shopping less frequently per month and were less likely to raise a garden or serve game now than before their divorce. These families were eating an average of 20 evening meals prepared at home now, with their children eating an average of 7 meals a month with relatives. Over half were exchanging meals or receiving support from relatives to feed their families. They were using generic brands and specials most of the time, regardless of income; use of these now was significantly greater than before divorce. They were significantly less secure about feeding their children (based on four questions) now than before their divorce. Those living alone, with lower income and older children, scored lower on some of the food security questions than their counterparts. Those with less tangible support reported less money for food and feeling less confident about feeding their family. Less confident women indicated that the loss of the husband's income, unreliable child support, and competing bills contributed to their insecurity about feeding their family. More confident women reported that a steady job, control over financial decisions, and family support contributed to their food security.

Conclusions: Many women were not aware of community programs that could help them avoid using public assistance programs. Intense stigma often makes use of Welfare programs unpleasant for those in need. The women using WIC experienced less stigma because this program handled requirements and vouchers differently than Welfare. Current users of Welfare and those with less education feel unsure they can support their families under workfare rules. The ages of the divorced mother's children, time constraints, and needs, as well as flexibility of meeting times, delivery methods, and location will all affect her utilization of educational programs. Money and conflict management, emotional adjustment, and communication skills programs were most useful to our divorced mothers. They felt that educational programs could be required to obtain a marriage license, but not to obtain a divorce or custody of children. Divorce forced most of these women to use more economical shopping and food preparation methods, lowered their perceived food security, and changed their use of methods of stretching their food dollar. Those with lower income, living alone, and with older children were particularly hard hit. Those with less confidence in their food security reported that loss of their ex-spouse's income, erratic child support, and competing bills undermined their food security.

Recommendations:

- Increase awareness of local and state-wide human service referral numbers and programs.

- Consider providing some assistance (such as some combination of Food Stamps, medical benefits, or subsidized child care) to needy, single parent families for each of their children from birth to an appropriate age (perhaps 5-8 years). This would focus benefits on children's needs, reduce stigma about using programs, and ease single mothers' transition to work.
- Set eligibility rules for workfare so that single mothers can work, save some money, and own a car, and still be eligible to receive subsidized child care.
- Increase subsidized child care benefits, and support training and licensing of qualified child care providers in rural areas.
- Implement a program, where needed, to change the attitudes of Welfare staff to be more positive toward clients, and increase staff persons' sensitivity to human suffering and individual needs.
- Focus job training for single parents on first, building self-esteem and skill assessment, followed by skill training. Use job training to increase their competitiveness for jobs and eliminate employer incentives to hire workfare recipients.
- Increase job opportunities for all those in rural areas, not just those on workfare.
- Form partnerships with local agencies to provide programs on money and conflict management, communication, divorce adjustment, and parenting, along with job training programs. Use peer educators to deliver these programs.
- Involve participants in determining locations, meeting times, child care needs, delivery methods, and activities for these programs. Offer programs at multiple locations in a county.
- Consider introducing two levels of marriage license fees designed to encourage participation in marriage preparation classes, prior to receiving a marriage license. A higher priced marriage license would not require any prenuptial education about marriage and family, while a couple could obtain a lower priced license by taking credits or hours of classes at a school, community college, or with a counselor.
- Encourage local food assistance programs to refer clients to local agencies that provide classes about purchasing food and cooking on a limited budget.

Based on the findings of our study of divorced, single women in six Pennsylvania counties, we believe that implementing these recommendations would enhance the success of workfare and reduce these women's need for Welfare overall, which could hopefully be the case throughout the state.

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Final Report

Single Parents' Attitudes Toward and Use of Government and Community Assistance: A Needs Assessment to Plan Interventions that Preserve Family Function and Lower the Risk of Poverty

Center for Rural Pennsylvania
Project 96-03

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III. Abstract

Divorced, single mothers (N = 107) in six Pennsylvania counties, who volunteered for a needs assessment, were interviewed in their home about their use of and attitudes toward community assistance programs, perceptions of workfare, the educational programs useful to them, and important educational program attributes and advertising channels to promote them. They were also asked whether certain educational programs should be required to obtain a marriage license, a divorce decree, or custody of minor children, and about their food procurement habits and current food security. Many of these women used or had used Welfare, Food Stamps, WIC, and the domestic relations office, but only a quarter had used EFNEP, Head Start, support groups, parenting education, money management, food education, and career development programs. Lack of awareness and familiarity with the latter programs appear to be among the reasons they were not used more often. These women felt that Welfare, child feeding programs, and emergency food and shelter programs were needed in their communities. However, they felt that child feeding programs were more accessible and less stigmatized than Welfare or emergency programs, and they felt more neutral about educational programs. They reported stigma was applied by Welfare staff, relatives, and community members both when receiving public assistance as well as in their daily interactions. They indicated that money management was the most useful program and that time commitment, meeting schedule, location, and learning practical skills would determine the success of these educational programs. They felt that single parents did not attend programs because of time constraints, inconvenient locations, poor transportation, fees, and feelings of shame and embarrassment. A majority felt that marriage education programs should be required to obtain a marriage license. Most of these women reported that divorce had affected their ability to feed their family, forcing many to shop less frequently, lose access to a freezer, garden less often, buy generic brands, and pay attention to specials and sales, while generally feeling less secure about feeding their family. Those who had a lower income, were living alone, with less tangible and informational support, and had older children were especially hard hit. Many reported that the loss of the husband's income meant that other bills competed for food money. Those who were less confident about feeding their family were less likely

to share food or exchange food with relatives and comparison shop or stock up at sales, but were more likely to make simpler meals and stretch food resources. Based on these findings, our recommendations are to

- Increase awareness of local and state-wide human service referral numbers and programs.
- Consider providing some assistance (some combination of Food Stamps, medical benefits, or subsidized child care) to needy single parent families for each of their children from birth to an appropriate age (perhaps 5-8 years). This would focus benefits on children's needs, reduce stigma, and ease the single mothers' transition to work.
- Set eligibility rules for workfare so that single mothers can work, save some money, and own a car, and still be eligible to receive subsidized child care.
- Increase subsidized child care benefits, and support training and licensing of qualified child care in rural areas.
- Implement a program, where needed, to change the attitudes of Welfare staff to be more positive toward clients, and increase staff persons' sensitivity to human suffering and individual needs.
- Focus job training for single parents on first, building self-esteem and skill assessment, followed by providing skill training. Use job training to increase competitiveness for jobs, and eliminate employer incentives to hire workfare recipients.
- Increase job opportunities for all those in rural areas, not just those on workfare.
- Form partnerships with local agencies to provide programs on money and conflict management, communication, divorce adjustment, and parenting, along with job training programs. Use peer educators to deliver these programs.
- Involve participants in determining locations, meeting times, child care needs, delivery methods, and activities for these programs. Offer programs at multiple locations in a county.
- Consider introducing two levels of marriage license fees designed to encourage participation in marriage preparation classes, prior to receiving a marriage license.
- Encourage local food assistance programs to refer clients to local agencies that provide classes about purchasing food and cooking on a limited budget.

IV. Project Summary

A. Justification.

In August 1996, federal legislation was passed that dramatically changed the social Welfare policies of the past 60 years (DeParle, 1997). Federal programs that guaranteed certain benefits to those in need have been changed to block grants, giving states broad decision-making authority in the design of local programs. In particular, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the federal guarantee of cash assistance for eligible poor children ended in October 1996 and Food Stamp benefits have been reduced as well (Pear, 1996c). The theme for the new legislation is work rather than Welfare, so AFDC has been replaced with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (DeParle, 1997). States must ensure that the head of every family on Welfare will be working within two years or less; must limit lifetime benefits to five years; may shift up to 30% of money in block grants to programs for child care, social services and child protection; and must set stiffer standards for low income families seeking Supplemental Social Security (Pear, 1996a). But under the Welfare bill, the 43 states, including Pennsylvania, that have received federal waivers to run experimental programs differing from the uniform federal model, may continue to do so, perhaps ensuring that the changes in assistance will not be so abrupt (Pear, 1996b). However, critics state that the reduction in Welfare benefits and limitations to five years of support will "add more than a million children to the ranks of the poor" (Purdum, 1996). Pennsylvania is among many states that propose to make allocations to counties where local authorities would take on a new and untested role in deciding how the block grant money would be used. Critics contend that this shift may be too sudden for communities to plan wisely for program allocations (Levy, 1996).

Single parents, who are primarily single mothers, could be hard hit by these changes. Reliable child care and transportation will be critical as these mothers strive to find and then keep a job. To help, the Federal Government allocated states an extra $600 million in 1997 for child care, but this will not solve all the problems of mothers moving out of Welfare and into the workplace. Parents in rural areas may still find child care in short supply and transportation assistance limited. Public transportation vouchers will not solve the problem of getting to work in many rural counties (DeParle, 1997).

Although Welfare is shifting from a training and education mode to a work mode, many single mothers have limited skills and need extensive training to become productive workers (Kilborn & Verhovek, 1996). Some states are moving those with few skills into community service jobs, but some say this does not prepare the Welfare recipient for the type of paying job that will raise them out of poverty (Kilborn, 1997). Rural counties will be faced with the need to move single parents into jobs that pay a living wage. Resources for job training and skill building may still be needed to ensure that single mothers can provide for their children.

Before its demise, AFDC was primarily an assistance program for low-income single parents, mainly custodial mothers. About a quarter of households with children under 18 were headed by females in 1992 (Rawlings, 1993) and over 40% lived in poverty (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). In 1995, a third of female-headed households were headed by divorced women (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). The incidence of divorce has risen 30% in the past 25 years, helped by adoption of no-fault divorce laws. Divorce clearly leads to greater risk of poverty and Welfare use for the custodial mother. In addition, children of divorce are at greater risk of problem behaviors as adolescents, including juvenile delinquency. In an effort to prevent family breakups, Michigan is considering revoking the no-fault divorce law and mandating financial incentives for couples to attend marriage counseling sessions prior to obtaining a marriage license. A new Louisiana law allows couples to choose between the standard no-fault marriage and a more carefully thought out covenant marriage. The covenant marriage is designed to foster stronger marriages that are less likely to end in divorce (Etzioni, 1997). Pennsylvania which also has no-fault divorce is also considering changing its divorce laws (Johnson, 1996).

Most counties in Pennsylvania have an array of community assistance programs, including family counseling, parenting education, and educational and skill building programs that might help prevent divorce and reduce the subsequent risk of poverty, Welfare dependence, and child development problems. However, many are not well utilized by residents prior to application for divorce or subsequently, as single parents as a result of divorce (Personal communication, 1996). In addition, only 10-25% of Children and Youth Service referrals, where families with delinquent children or serious child-parent problems might find help, are voluntary. Most cases are community referrals prompted by evidence of abuse or by court order (Personal interviews, 1996). In an effort to protect the Welfare of children of divorce, at least six counties in Pennsylvania have court mandated one-time divorce education classes as a requirement for couples with minor children filing for a divorce (Mastrofski, 1996). How successful these fledgling programs will be in prompting divorcing parents to take advantage of preventative community education programs is not known. As Welfare shrinks, counties need to know if a greater portion of block grant money should be used for programs that prevent family breakup or divorce, how willing people at risk are to use these programs, and whether such programs should be required by local or state law for all couples passing through specific family transitions and legal transactions (e.g., applying for a marriage license or birth certificate, filing for divorce).

This report presents the attitudes of divorced, low-income, single mothers toward public assistance, child nutrition/feeding programs, emergency assistance programs, and preventative educational programs, whether they have used these programs, and whether they anticipate needing these programs in the future. We also report their initial reactions to "workfare" and their opinions of and experiences with general assistance and child feeding/nutrition programs. We report what, when, how, and where these parents think educational interventions that might prevent divorce, improve skills, and reduce the risk of troubled children should be offered so that parents like themselves will take advantage of them. Finally, we report their opinions of their own food and financial security. This data should be very useful to state and county agencies planning block grant use as workfare replaces Welfare.

B. Literature Review

Use of and Attitudes toward Community Assistance Programs with an Emphasis on Welfare and Child Nutrition Programs

The economics of divorce

The U.S. divorce rate has increased dramatically since 1940. About half of today's marriages are expected to end in divorce (Cherlin, 1990; Furstenberg, 1990). As a result, half of all children can expect to live in single parent households before adulthood (Cherlin, 1990). The rise in divorce has contributed to the rise in single parent households. In 1993, 30% of all families with children were single parent families (Lino, 1995). Over 80% of custodial parents are women, many of whom have minor children (Rowe, 1991). Unfortunately, one half of all poor families are female headed and half of these are the result of divorce or separation

(Dixon & Rettig, 1994). Nation-wide, the poverty rate of single mothers is 30.4%, much greater than that for two-parent families (5.7%) and male single parents (12.0%) (Brown & Hirschl, 1995).

Typically, the woman's household income is cut 30-50% by divorce and is not likely to improve despite increased hours of work after divorce (Espenshade, 1979; Duncan & Hoffman, 1985; Stroup & Pollock, 1994), due to low wage jobs and inadequate and unenforced child support (Rowe, 1991). Often the drop in income begins with separation (Weiss, 1984), and household income remains reduced for five years if no remarriage occurs. While child support may be awarded to divorced women with children, Maccoby and Mnookin (1992) found the level of support dropped over the first three years after the divorce. Inadequate child support or noncompliance in payment remains a problem. Lino (1995) found that most rural and urban single parent households did not receive child support, despite having dependent children, making it more likely they could slide into poverty and become eligible to receive public assistance (Duncan, 1994). Nearly half of female headed families have incomes below poverty level and nearly half depend on Welfare for some portion of their income (Dixon & Rettig, 1994).

General assistance, also called Welfare, includes cash assistance, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), rent assistance, Medicaid, and Food Stamps. A number of factors affect whether a single mother will take advantage of public assistance, including job availability, pay and hours worked, education, age and number of children, remarriage or cohabitation, and social networks. Some of these factors reflect human capital that has been defined as a person's investment in education, job experience and training, as well as the socio-economic status of one's family (Parker, 1994; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Others reflect family structure. Social networks would be part of what Coleman calls social capital or the complex networks that parents use to advance their family's success (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Social capital is created by involvement in social relationships (Furstenberg & Hughes).

If a divorced woman has adequate human capital (education and work experience), she may be less likely to use public assistance. Using the Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics of 1967-1973, Espenshade (1979) found ten times as many divorced women took jobs as went on Welfare. However, pay was usually less for hours worked than men's, so the loss of the ex-husband's income was not recovered (Duncan, 1994). Dixon and Rettig (1994) found that the predictors of income adequacy two years after divorce were the mother's hours of work and education. Rogers and Rogers (1992) found female heads of households without a high school diploma were more likely to experience chronic poverty. About 63% of all female heads of families with children under 18 years of age do not have a high school diploma (Starrels, Bould, & Nicholas, 1994). Children can affect the need for public assistance. Starrels et al. (1994) found that risk of poverty was associated with the ages of the children. Single mothers with preschool children were twice as likely to be living in poverty than those whose children were in school. Heath and Kiker (1992) found the number of children was a positive predictor of poverty for divorced women.

Some divorced women also remarry which may improve their economic status. Duncan and Hoffman (1985) found remarriage brought divorced women's status back to pre-divorce levels or above. But if divorced women did not remarry, those remaining divorced after five years were no better off economically than at one year after divorce. Divorced women may also live with their families or with unrelated males (called cohabitation). Winkler (1993) found that women who lived with their parents had a median household income 2.3 times the relevant household poverty level, and the average household income of women cohabiting with an unrelated male was similar to a married couple household of similar age with young children. However, Manning and Lichter (1996), using data from the 1990 decennial census, Public Use of Microdata Sample (PUMS), found that, although a cohabiting partner's contribution reduced the proportion of children living in poverty by almost 30%, it still did not provide children the economic resources that dual parent families did.

Coleman postulated that individuals embedded in dense social networks are more likely to have accumulated social capital and have greater access to help and support of others in the community, especially in times of need (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). One measure of a divorced parent's social capital would be the extent of their social support or help network. Access to a social network that includes family and friends who provide a variety of types of support might influence a divorced mother's need for general assistance, perhaps making her less likely to use it. Wan, Jaccard, and Ramey (1996) provided evidence that four dimensions of social support may be distinguished: emotional support which conveys a person's worth and acceptance; information support which helps a person cope with problems; companionship support which conveys belonging and facilitates positive moods; and tangible (or instrumental) support which represents the provision of financial and material aid. They found that single mothers made distinctions in the degree of these types of support provided by relatives, close friends, and co-workers. Using a longitudinal study of pregnant teenagers and their children, Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) found that the strength of a mother's help network was one of several measures of social capital that significantly influenced favorable outcomes (such as completing high school) in their children, even when controlling for measures of human capital. Letiecq, Anderson, and Koblinsky (1996) used the Family Support Scale to determine that homeless mothers received significantly less help from their social support network than housed mothers during the six months prior to contact by the interviewer. Flowers, Schneider, and Ludtke (1996) compared degrees of emotional and instrumental support among a convenience sample of married, single, and divorced mothers and found that divorced mothers received significantly less instrumental support than married or single mothers. Married mothers received this support from their spouses while divorced mothers received more instrumental support from their mothers. This suggests the breadth of a divorced mother's support system may impact her ability to marshal instrumental or tangible support that may enable her to avoid the use of general assistance. Of more direct importance to use of public assistance personnel, Parker (1994) used data from the Family Income Study in Washington State and found that, while material (or tangible - instrumental) support had an indirect effect on degree of economic self sufficiency (DESS), workplace support (in the form of paid sick leave, health insurance, subsidized child care, and coworker support) directly affected DESS. While these studies indicated that the degree and origin of social support a divorced mother has may influence both immediate and long term family circumstances, little is known of the role that the various types of social support might play in moderating the use of public assistance by divorced women in rural areas.

Rural urban differences

The pattern of use of public assistance differs in urban and rural areas. First, use of public assistance by any type of participant (single, married, etc.) is lower in rural areas than urban areas. Hirschl and Rank (1991) found that participation in AFDC and Food Stamps was higher in urban areas than rural areas across the nation, regardless of poverty levels, and suggested that this might be due to differences in physical access to services and social concentration of use, which spread information and supported acceptability. Using the Panel Study of Income

Dynamics from 1977 to 1987, Rank and Hirschl (1993) subsequently found that low-income residents in rural counties were less likely to be receiving Food Stamps than their urban counterparts. Data from the Panel Study verified that rural residents were more likely than urban residents to report that the reasons for this were a) they did not think they were eligible and b) there were adverse attitudes toward Food Stamp recipients. The authors argued that urban residents are more likely to interact, providing more accurate information about eligibility and encountering less adverse attitudes, because shared use reduced stigma. Examining Welfare use patterns in Wisconsin, Rank and Hirschl (1988) found that rural users were more likely to leave Welfare than urban users, independent of other factors, but female headed households were more likely to stay on Welfare in either setting.

Poverty rates in general and those for children are higher in rural areas than urban areas (Lichter & Eggebeen, 1992; Brown & Hirschl, 1995), and about 60% of the increase in child poverty seen in rural areas in the 1980s was due to increases in children living only with their mother (Lichter & Eggebeen, 1992). Brown and Hirschl (1995) found that the rural poor were less protected from poverty by employment and that employment did less to reduce the chance of poverty for rural single parents than urban parents.

This difference in employment effect for single mothers is attributed to fewer job opportunities--most of which are low paid, more traditional family values restricting use of child care, and lower educational attainment (McLaughlin & Sachs, 1988). Using data from the 1980 Public Use Microdata Sample of the U.S. Census, McLaughlin and Sachs (1988) verified that the earnings of rural women were less likely to raise them above poverty because they were more likely to be poorly paid and work fewer hours per year than those in urban areas. Additionally, rural women were less likely to take advantage of government assistance, and those who did, received lower assistance payments than urban women. Brown and Hirschl (1995) suggested that the rural poor, including single mothers, may be excluded from using benefits because of relative isolation and poor access to low income social networks. They also suggested that the rural poor are stigmatized and excluded from job networks and educational opportunities which may limit their upward mobility.

Public opinions about public assistance

Public opinion surveys examining public attitudes toward Welfare over the past 50 years suggest that the public generally supports most public assistance programs, but use of the term 'Welfare' rather than 'assistance to the poor' can consistently produce negative feedback (Will, 1993). Using the 1986 General Social Survey, which contained vignettes to assess perceptions of the deserving poor, Will found that the vast majority of Americans supported basic assistance for families with children, especially if the parent (regardless of sex) was actively looking for employment. But this support disappeared if the parent was not looking for work or was too selective about where to work. Support for public assistance does vary along racial lines, however, with African Americans being more supportive than whites (Groskind, 1994). It also varies with need. Hasenfeld and Rafferty (1989) reported the economically vulnerable (low income, nonwhite, receiving benefits) especially supported continuance of Welfare programs.

Public opinions about general assistance also differ by rural and urban populations. Osgood (1975) found rural residents of Pennsylvania less supportive of Welfare recipients and more likely to believe individuals were responsible for their own poverty. In a later study, Camasso and Moore (1985) found that rural Pennsylvania residents gave lower ratings to the importance of public assistance, day care centers, and cost of living increases for Welfare recipients than urban

Pennsylvania residents. In contrast, Davis (1988) reported that Wyoming residents (a rural state) overwhelmingly favored providing money to support poor children and their mothers but felt the amount should be based on need.

A few very early studies reported that attitudes toward social programs varied by knowledge of those programs. Ogren (1973) found that individuals with the least knowledge about public Welfare had the most favorable attitudes toward Welfare recipients, while Keith (1980) reported that Iowans with greater knowledge of social work had more positive attitudes toward social work.

Stigma associated with receiving assistance

Hirschl and Rank (1991), Rank (1994), and Rogers-Dillon (1995) have reviewed several theories that have been suggested to explain why stigma occurs with regard to public assistance. Stigma can result from violation of the idea of rugged individualism, or providing for oneself unassisted, which labels the recipient as a failure. Stigma can also be applied as a way to attach a high price to assistance so that those receiving assistance will not ask for more. Communities can attach stigma to those given assistance out of concern for the community's interests rather than the individual's right to receive assistance. Goffman (Rogers-Dillon, 1995) defined stigma as disagreement between a person's virtual identity and actual identity. Others define one's virtual identity, using stereotypes based on surface appearances, while one's actual identity is composed of the attributes the individual actually possesses. When an attribute in the actual identity is incompatible with the virtual identity, that attribute becomes a stigma. Goffman felt that people were stigmatized if they were recognized by the use of certain symbols and considered Food Stamps such a symbol.

Welfare participants are more stigmatized in rural areas than urban perhaps because use of Welfare assistance is more accepted in cities where subcultures can form that support use of assistance by exchange of information and shared behaviors (Rank & Hirschl, 1993). From interviews with urban and rural welfare recipients, Rank and Hirschl (1988) reported two distinct differences between urban and rural welfare recipients - perceived stigma and patterns of interaction. Recipients in rural areas felt greater degrees of stigma than urban recipients, partially because Welfare offices were highly visible in the community. Rural residents on Welfare were less likely to interact with one another in the Welfare office or to associate with other recipients than those in urban settings.

A number of studies have examined how Welfare recipients, in particular women receiving AFDC, feel about the stigma associated with assistance. These studies indicate that the perception of stigma was increased by better education and longer time on AFDC (Horan & Austin, 1974), passive acceptance (Kerbo, 1972), and receiving cash assistance (AFDC) rather than by only in-kind services (Food Stamps), although this data was collected in only one location (Struart, 1975). Based on a sample of urban, low-income single mothers, Smith and Hoerr (1992) reported that those who had received both Food Stamps and AFDC were more likely to feel stigma than recipients of only Food Stamps. Nichols-Casebolt (1986) found some evidence that recipients of AFDC did have lower psychological well-being (PWB) scores than non-recipients and some evidence that a lack of work contributed to this low PWB score. Goodban (1985) found that AFDC recipients used three methods of coping with stigma: identifying with the middle class and considering their situation temporary; identifying with the lower class and feeling their situation was beyond their control; and accepting Welfare without the negative image. Likewise, Grella (1990) found that middle class, divorced women who received assistance distanced themselves from those of their new reference group, e.g., AFDC, if it was stigmatized.

Two important qualitative studies of Welfare recipients have been conducted recently. Rogers-Dillon (1995) found evidence that stigma is not a constant, easily measured entity but may vary or be produced by interaction of the social audience, situation, and recipient's life history. Her urban, ethnically diverse respondents described Welfare as a necessity that made the stigma less painful, but the meaning of Welfare was shaped by their life history, so some viewed it as an opportunity, others as a legacy, and still others as the result of outside forces. They managed the stigma of Food Stamps by using cash, sending someone else shopping, and shopping in different stores. Jarrett (1996) conducted focus groups with urban, African-American, never married mothers who received AFDC and found these women were stigmatized because of family roles (being a single, never married mother), employment status, or neighborhood residence, or a combination of the three. They offered their accomplishments as parents and efforts to find employment to deflect institutional attitudes that labeled them as reluctant workers and irresponsible parents.

Most studies conducted to examine stigma have focused on the urban poor with only a few exceptions. Rank and Hirschl (1988) interviewed 50 Welfare families in Wisconsin and detected that rural recipients felt more stigma (even going so far as using their Food Stamps in metropolitan stores to avoid detection), were observed to interact less with other recipients, and did not feel others in the community were 'in the same boat', in contrast to urban residents. Duncan and Lamborghini (1994) compared the social structure of a poor, rural Appalachian community and a rural New England community by completing 145 personal interviews with both poor and middle class residents. The job poor, Appalachian community delegated the poor to a lower class in which poor women had limited aspirations because of limited opportunity. In contrast, the New England community had more job opportunities and a more inclusive community structure that used volunteer organizations to serve the whole community. Low-income women in the New England community had more concrete aspirations and career goals and reported little stigmatization. Brown and Hirschl (1995) proposed that poor access to social Welfare benefits and a class structure that inhibits upward mobility among the rural poor might be part of the reason the chances of poverty are so high in rural compared to urban areas. They challenged researchers to explore more fully how rural social life is constructed and reproduced.

Other community programs

In addition to Welfare, most rural communities have a variety of government and community supported assistance programs available to divorced, single parents. These include the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), Head Start, emergency programs (food banks, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters), educational programs, and job training programs. WIC, EFNEP, and Head Start have been evaluated exhaustively for their impact on birth weight, nutrient intake, and health status of participants (Abrams, 1993; Brink & Sobel, 1994; McKey et al., 1985).

Much less recent data is available about participant's attitudes toward these programs. A survey in Ohio of WIC recipients, half of whom were single mothers, indicated that over 70% of recipients preferred receiving WIC to receiving more Food Stamps (Hamilton, Schiller, & Boyne, 1994). Koblinsky, Guthrie, and Lynch (1992) offered nutrition workshops and newsletters to Head Start mothers. Compared to the control groups who did not receive any nutrition information, mothers receiving nutrition instruction made positive changes in food shopping and preparation. About 40% of participants reported liking either the workshop or newsletters best; neither method of delivery was preferred by a majority. In 1990, during a 25th year Silver Ribbon Panel review of Head Start, a survey of staff and participating parents revealed that over 90% of these parents reported positive program effects on their children (Lombardi, 1990). The survey also revealed that the program had difficulty attracting and retaining qualified staff due to inadequate salaries; that there were long waiting lists for Head Start programs, especially where no other services existed; that children of other ages needed the program; and that parents needed extended hours and days of operation.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reported a doubling of homeless shelters between 1984 and 1988, and, by 1992, family shelters comprised 39% of all shelters (Weinreb & Rossi, 1995). In a survey of family shelter managers conducted in 1992, Weinreb and Rossi found the shelters were of three types: emergency, transitional, and battered women's, and only 10% of the shelters responding were in rural areas. Surveys of shelter residents indicate that 80% or more were families headed by single parents, mostly mothers. Prevalence of community member use and community attitudes toward emergency programs (food banks, homeless shelters, and domestic violence shelters) are less well documented, especially in rural areas.

Few studies have examined participant reactions to a wide variety of community programs which would allow comparisons between programs. In one recent study, Dodds, Ahluwalia, and Baligh (1996) conducted focus groups with families using food assistance and Welfare programs in North Carolina and found that this primarily African-American female group (36% were separated, divorced, or widowed) perceived three barriers to public assistance program participation: discouraging rules; marginal value for effort expended, and community stigma and poor treatment by agency personnel. However, the WIC program was praised by these participants because they felt welcomed by agency personnel. These participants recommended changing some agency rules for eligibility and benefit distribution, offering skill building educational programs, and changing staff attitudes toward clients to improve participation in public assistance programs. The perception that the Welfare program has rigid regulations, bureaucratic delays, and is hostile toward Welfare clientele has been documented by others (Susser & Kreniske, 1987; Rank, 1994).

To enrich our understanding of the social environment of rural, divorced, single mothers in Pennsylvania, we examined their use of a range of community assistance programs that could help them adjust to the economic and emotional impact of divorce. A number of these programs, in theory, could help divorced mothers improve their economic status. In addition, we examined the attitudes of these divorced mothers toward selected groups of these programs since attitudes can affect a person's intent to take advantage of such programs. We focused specifically on their opinions about access to, and need for these programs, and personal discomfort and stigma associated with use of these programs. We also assessed their initial reaction to workfare, the Pennsylvania response to Welfare reform. Finally, to supplement the forgoing quantitative questions, we recorded these women's answers to a set of open-ended questions about their experience with and opinions of Welfare, WIC, EFNEP and Head Start.

Educational Needs and Educational Program Attributes

Divorce prevalence and impact

Today, more than half of all U.S. citizens who marry may be expected to divorce (Cherlin, 1990; Furstenberg, 1990), and nearly 50% of children will live in a single parent home by age 16 (Furstenberg). The economic consequences of divorce are more detrimental for mothers than for fathers because over 90% of divorced mothers retain custody, and most bear more than half the cost of child support. In 1992, 39% of divorced or separated women with children were living in poverty, e.g., a significant group of children were living in poverty (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993). In addition to economic impacts, children of divorce suffer short and long-term emotional impacts. Initially, the stress of marital disruption can result in diminished performance at school, dropping out of school and behavioral problems; in the long term, children of divorce often exhibit lower advanced educational attainment and difficulty establishing stable emotional partnerships and marriages (Furstenberg, 1990; Wallerstein, 1991; Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994).

Wallerstein (1991) emphasized that divorce is not a single event but a continuum of events beginning with the failing marriage, followed by the divorce, and a subsequent adjustment period which may take years. A remarriage can lead to more conflict and distress for children as well (Wallerstein, 1991; Amato & Keith, 1991). Indeed, family sociologists report the inter-generational transmission of divorce (Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Pope & Mueller, 1976). Family researchers have also suggested that conflict between parents, occurring prior to and continuing after the divorce, contributes as much to children's problems as the event of the divorce itself (Wallerstein, 1991; Cherlin et al., 1991; Barber & Eccles, 1992; Amato & Keith, 1991; Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994). For instance, research that compared two-parent, conflictual families with conflict-free, single parent families found that children in the latter situation have fewer emotional difficulties (Shaw, 1991). Custodial mothers often have more inconsistent parenting practices immediately after divorce than married mothers. The quality of contact with the ex-husband may also affect the child's development (Shaw, 1991). Finally, risk of divorce is not randomly distributed and is more common in younger couples, those with less education, and in certain ethnic groups, e.g., African Americans and Hispanics (Duncan, 1994). Furstenberg and Teitler (1994) suggested that families who eventually divorce may have poor parenting behaviors, have high levels of conflict, suggesting poor communication skills, or suffer from persistent economic distress.

Reevaluating divorce

Awareness of the multiple impacts of divorce on families and the growing recognition of the societal costs of family dysfunction have prompted the legislative and judicial systems in some states to questions the wisdom of no-fault divorces (Johnson, 1996), in which a divorce may be granted even if only one spouse wants it, and the ease with which people may marry (New York Times, June 1997). A Michigan law, proposed in 1996, would have required counseling for divorcing couples with children at home, limited the ability of spouses to divorce unless there was evidence of certain abuses, and provided an incentive for couples considering marriage to go through a counseling session before marrying. Those receiving the counseling session would receive the marriage license for $20 as opposed to the normal $100 (Johnson, 1996). A recent Louisiana law established two types of marriages, standard no-fault marriage and a covenant marriage, which requires more deliberation and makes divorce more difficult (Etzioni, 1997). A judge in Adrian, Michigan, recently initiated a community marriage policy in which all couples seeking to marry in Lenawee County, Michigan, must first receive marital education by a certified professional (Marano, 1997). In Pennsylvania, at least 30 counties have court-connected education programs for either divorcing or separated parents or those involved in some kind of custody dispute or litigation (Mastrofski, 1996). These activities in various states are all attempts to ensure that couples considering union or divorce think about the consequences.

Interventions with divorcing families and divorced parents

Interventions to help families going through divorce have been developed (divorce therapy, divorce mediation, and divorce education), and some judges require that divorcing parents participate in one of these. Divorce mediation, one of the most successful, offers a viable alternative to the antagonistic setting of normal court proceedings, helps resolve conflicts, and may reduce conflict in future parent and ex-parent interactions (Shaw, 1991). Education programs are distinct from therapy and mediation and provide mainly information and skills for participants to apply themselves. While some mandated divorce education courses are for parents only, e.g., Children of Separation and Divorce (COSD) parenting seminars (Frieman, Garon, & Mandell, 1994) and Children Cope with Divorce seminar (Brown et al., 1994), others, like the Families in Transition (FIT) Program, have been developed for both parents and children to attend (Brown et al., 1994). In Jefferson County, Kentucky, if the custodial parent and the children, ages 8 -16 years, attend the FIT program, the divorce can be finalized. Assessment indicated that 89% of parents were satisfied with the program, and 60% would attend follow-up sessions (Brown et al., 1994). Other programs have been developed for divorced custodial parents (Warren & Amara, 1985) or non-custodial parents to voluntarily attend (Devlin, Brown, Beebe, & Parulis, 1992).

Warren and Amara (1985) reported that participant reactions to the Parenting After Divorce Program were generally positive and that parents who had more disagreement with their ex-partner and lower quality of life gained the most from the program. The authors reported that focusing on teaching skills, including both sexes in the sessions, completing the sessions in 6-7 weeks, and using leaders who were also divorced parents were important to success. Thompson, Grow, Ruma, Daly, & Burke (1993) reported that 34 middle and low-income parents (a quarter of whom were single parents) who completed an eight-week practical child management course made substantial changes in child management over time. They suggested the program was successful because the material was practical, contained a variety of types of activities, and was offered at different times and locations to make it accessible. Neither of these studies used control groups or provided data on attrition rates. Devlin, Brown, Beebe, and Parulis (1992) reported high attrition rates among a fairly well educated group who volunteered to participate in a parent education program for divorced non-custodial fathers, although those who completed the six-session course reported high satisfaction with the program.

Alternative parent education delivery methods and attributes

Although much research has focused on offering educational programs for parents through classes, several recent studies have evaluated the impact of a newsletter series. Riley, Meinhardt, Nelson, Salisbury, and Winnett (1991) found that high risk parents of infants (e.g., first - time parents, single parents, lower income parents) benefited the most from an age-paced series of three newsletters (keyed to a specific month in a newborn's first year) addressing adolescent parenting to a sample of white midwest suburban-urban parents. Most were well educated, two-parent families (only 9% were single parents) in which the mother was more likely to read the newsletter. The authors found parents reading the newsletter were more likely to monitor their children's behaviors than parents randomly assigned to a control group who did not receive the newsletters.

Educators have been concerned about reaching and retaining high risk audiences for voluntary programs. For instance, Powell (1986) found that 48% of low - income parents dropped out of a parent education class compared to 41% of middle-income parents. Several research reports have examined factors that would encourage volunteer participation of urban or suburban at risk, low-income residents in parenting or other family-focused education classes (Powell &

Eisenstadt, 1988; Lengua et al., 1992; Meyers, 1993). These reports indicated that programs should be offered close to the audience's homes, should involve both parents and children, should provide child care, and could charge a small fee (Lengua et al., 1992). A program should offer content meaningful to the audience, create an environment where participants feel comfortable, and acknowledge diversity (Meyers, 1993). Such programs need to incorporate informal and formal discussion (Powell & Eisenstadt, 1988). These studies of urban and suburban participants indicated that education, income, ethnicity, and gender affect beliefs about parenting and child development. As income and education levels decreased, less value was placed on parenting skills, and more reliance was placed on externals, like teachers, to address problems (Lengua et al., 1992). Among men, fathering styles and approved child behavior vary by ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Meyers, 1993). Lengua et al. (1992) stressed the importance of completing a needs assessment of the target audience to ensure that they will welcome the subsequent intervention.

Less is known of rural parent's perceptions of acceptable educational interventions. Spoth, Redmond, Hockaday, and Shin (1996) examined the barriers to participation in a family skills program offered through schools in rural counties in Iowa. They interviewed families (87% were two-parent families) who refused to participate in the offered program and found that schedule conflicts, time demanded for the program, privacy concerns, and another family member's refusal to participate (spouse or child) were primary reasons for non-participation. The data also indicate that some parents felt uncomfortable discussing issues with others, and lower socioeconomic status families resisted outsiders' involvement in family affairs. We found no reports of the perceptions of rural, divorced mothers about acceptable educational programs.

An alternative model

For 20 years, the United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service has been conducting the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), which is designed to provide nutrition education and budgeting skills to low - income, nutritionally at-risk women with young children (Brink & Sobel, 1994). This program enrolls interested, low-income women in a 6 -12 month program of bimonthly lessons provided by a paraprofessional, either individually in the home or in small groups in a local meeting room. Enyart (1985) found enrolled, rural women liked being given a more cost and time-efficient combination of home visits, mailed lessons, and follow-up telephone calls. Home visits were also well received, especially by isolated, rural mothers (Chipman & Kendall, 1989). Today, EFNEP places more emphasis on group meetings and more single mothers participate. The program has been extensively evaluated in a number of states and found to be effective in changing dietary behavior based on 12 and 20-month follow-up studies (for example, Brink & Sobel, 1994; Amstutz & Dixon, 1986; Torisky et al., 1989). Recently, EFNEP has expanded its educational offerings to produce Super Cupboards, a program designed to reach frequent users of emergency food services with a range of educational activities, including parenting, job readiness, first aid, home security, handling drug and alcohol abuse, as well as budgeting, cooking skills, food safety, and nutrition (Heald, 1996). The EFNEP model represents another way to deliver voluntary educational programs to rural, single parents.

In the future, state or local officials may make certain educational programs mandatory prior to specific life events like marriage and divorce. Attendance is assured at mandatory programs, but participation might have more meaningful long-term effects if the program is structured to address the attitudes, beliefs, and needs of the audience. To provide officials with this information, we examined participants' interest in clearly defined skills needed to deal with divorce, to raise children, and to manage family income and food resources. We also sought to identify program attributes which might reduce barriers to attendance and advertising channels participants thought most likely to attract their attention. Finally, we asked our respondents some open-ended questions to learn what educational programs divorced parents really need, why single parents don't attend educational programs, and what would make single parents uncomfortable at such programs.

Food Security and Feeding the Family

Single parent demographics and food costs

The proportion of families headed by single parents has doubled in the last 25 years. In 1970, single parents maintained 13% of all families with children under 18; in 1993, single parents maintained 30%. Single parents, especially single mothers, are more economically vulnerable than two-parent families (Lino, 1995). In 1991, 47% of families with children under 18 headed by a single mother fell below the poverty threshold (for their household size) compared to only 8% of families with children under 18 headed by two parents (Lino & Guthrie, 1994). In many studies, single parents are defined by marital status, but household composition data revealed that some single parents spend time living with other adults. Bumpass and Raley (1995) used data from the National Survey of Families and Households in 1987-88 and found that nearly a third of a child's single parent time was spent either in cohabitation with another adult or with grandparents. In another study, Winkler (1993) examined cohabiting patterns in the Current Population Survey for 1986 and found that 72% of single mothers lived alone as the sole supporter of their children. She found that single parents living with either their parents or an unrelated male were significantly better off than single mothers who double up with one another or live alone. This distinction is important for any examination of single parents' food security.

The food security of single parents is affected by total income. This usually drops upon separation. Using the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) data from 1968-1979, Weiss (1984) examined the household income, source of income, and expenditures for separating and divorcing mothers during the last year of marriage and the subsequent five years. He found that household income dropped dramatically and remained at the new low for the five-year period, although the amount of drop varied with initial income category. Higher income women lost about 50% of their original income, while low-income women lost 25 to 30%. During this six-year interval, higher income single mother households depended almost solely on wages and child support, while Food Stamps and Welfare were the most important sources of income in the lower income group. In about 40% of these lower income households, assistance payments made up 50% or more of household income five years after separation or divorce. After separation or divorce, the cost of food eaten at home dropped, reflecting the departure of a major food consumer and the purchase of less expensive food. But in lower income, single parent households, the cost of food absorbed about one third of household income, while in higher income, single parent households, it absorbed about one fifth or less. The poor households spent about 50% of their income on housing and food, while the higher income groups spent about 40%. In sum, low-income, single parent households had less income and had to spend a greater proportion on food.

Rural urban differences

Rural divorced mothers use different sources of income to cover household costs compared to urban divorced mothers. Lino (1995) compared characteristics of rural and urban single parents using data from the 1990-92 Consumer Expenditure Survey. The households selected for study contained only the single parent and at least one child under 18; households with other adults were not included. While in either setting, about 90% of single parent families were headed by women and 60% had only a high school education, a larger proportion of single parents in rural settings were white (84% vs. 64%) and divorced or separated (79% vs. 69%). The percentage of non-whites and never marrieds in urban settings was twice that in rural settings. More rural single parents received some child support than did urban single parents (39% vs. 31%). This was the second most likely received form of support after wages for rural women and may reflect the higher percentage of divorced, single parents in rural settings. Child support provided 11% of total income for rural single parents compared to 6% for urban. A significantly lower percentage of rural, single parents received public assistance as AFDC (14% vs. 29%) and Food Stamps (24% vs 36%). Public assistance and Food Stamps provided only 6% of total income for rural single parents compared to 12% for urban single parents. Proportions of income spent on food were similar (about 20%) for urban and rural single parents but may not be accurate as these figures do not reflect support provided by WIC. Thus, after wages, the rural, single parents relied more on child support than public assistance to meet household costs, but spent a proportion of income on food similar to urban, single parents.

Poverty and food expenditures

If the single mother lives in poverty, she is likely to spend even more of her income for food. Lino (1996) examined the income and spending of poor and non-poor families from the 1990-1992 Consumer Expenditure Survey. The poor were defined as those whose before-tax income and expenditures fell below the poverty threshold, a very strict definition. The majority of these poor households (52%)

contained only a single parent with children while 97% of these heads were mothers. In contrast, 74% of non-poor households contained two parents and their children. Eleven percent of these poor households were rural compared to 14% of the non-poor, and 69% of the poor households received Food Stamps compared to 6% of the non-poor. In the poor households, Food Stamps accounted for 21% of household income but less than 1% of non-poor household income (wages provided 35% of poor and 87% of non-poor household income). Food accounted for 32% of total household expenditures in poor households compared to 16% in non-poor households. Only 50% of the poor households reported eating food away from home compared to 91% of the non-poor households. About 69% of expenditures in poor households were spent on food and housing compared to 42% in non-poor households. These poor households spend two thirds of their income on food and shelter, and Food Stamps supplied two thirds of the money spent on food.

If the poor are defined as those relying on some form of public assistance, the situation of single parents in this economic group is equally bleak. Passero (1996) examined the same data set, but looked at the data for all households receiving public assistance (Welfare, Food Stamps, SSI, Medicaid, housing support). Single parent households that receive public assistance were spending about 29% of their income on food and 41% for housing compared to dual parent families receiving Welfare who spent 20% for food and 34% for housing. Smith and Hoerr (1992) found the low - income single mothers in their sample were also spending the equivalent of 26% of the family's total income (including Food Stamps) on food.

Food spending patterns

After divorce or separation, a single mother still has to feed her family despite the drop in household income and cost of housing. But she faces some tough personal decisions about the foods she can purchase. More families are buying convenience foods and eating out rather than buying staples and eating at home (Smallwood, Blaylock, Lutz, & Blisard, 1995). Between 1980 and 1992, as household income increased, food spending for both food at home and away from home has increased, and households in the highest income level tended to buy more convenience foods. Those in the highest income quintile spent 40% of their food budget on food away from home compared to 24% in the lowest income quintile. Options for shopping and eating are more limited in rural areas. In 1992, households in urban areas spent 34% of their food budget on food away from home compared to rural households who spent 29%. Morris, Neuhauser, and Campbell (1992) reported that, in 1988, rural counties had an average of 3.8 supermarkets per county (one supermarket per 265 square miles) compared to an average of 29 supermarkets per urban county (one supermarket per 27 square miles). They also reported that 32% of Food Stamps were redeemed in smaller food stores in persistently poor rural counties compared to 20% in these stores nationally. Cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (the U.S. Department of Agriculture food plan on which Food Stamp allocations are based) was 36% more in these smaller food stores than Food Stamps provided. Thus, a divorced, rural mother with limited income must be a very sophisticated shopper to keep within her food budget and still provide some of the food choices her family likes.

Low income family food systems

Only a few studies provide a view of the single mother's food system and how she uses it to provide food for her family. Campbell and Desjardins (1989) conducted an intensive inductive study of 20 urban low-income families of mixed ethnicity with at least one child under 12. Six were single parent families. They found these 20 families employed a variety of strategies to insure food was available to their children and that some mothers would feed their children first, using what was left for their own meal. These families acquired food from a variety of sources, including different kinds of stores, restaurants, and a network of sources of free or no cost meals (day cares, neighbors and family, and charitable food assistance) in an attempt to take maximum advantage of their food environment. Within the family, the mother or parents had to balance a number of other needs (child care, transportation, clothing, laundry, bills, etc.) against food. The authors identified three types of families based on how they provided food for their members: the self-reliant, who focused on what they could do on their own within their own home and limited resources; informal barterers, who traded for services among an often extensive network of friends and family and who rarely contacted the formal market/wage economy; and the adapters, who relied primarily on the formal institutions (banks, social service system) for resources, worked hard to get into market economy, and purchased rather than bartered services.

Food shopping behaviors

Using quantitative questions, Lino and Guthrie (1994) examined the food shopping behaviors and beliefs of single and married mothers about family food adequacy, using the 1989-90 Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture. The average age of the mothers in this sample was 35. Twice as many of the single mothers as the married mothers had no high school degree (28% vs. 11%). The single mothers had an average income one third that of the married mothers, and significantly more of the single mothers than the married mothers were not employed. When asked if they had "enough of the kinds of food we want to eat", significantly fewer of the single mothers than married mothers agreed (58% vs. 78%). A lower proportion of weekly food expenses was allocated to food away from home in single parent families compared to married couple families (15% vs. 21%). More of the single mothers than the married mothers received Food Stamps (38% vs. 3%) and WIC (11% vs. 3%).

The mother was the main food shopper in 98% of the single mother families compared to 74% of the married families. Only 39% of the single mothers shopped at least once a week, and 33% shopped once a month or less compared to 69% and 6% of the married women. Smith and Hoerr (1992) interviewed 73 low-income, single mothers of whom 27 were current users, 20 were non-users, and 16 were past users of the local food bank. They found that current food bank users shopped for food more often than non-users, and they shopped five times more often at convenience stores than non-users. The researchers had insufficient information to explain this shopping pattern, but it could be due to location of grocery stores, lack of transportation, insufficient funds, or poor understanding of the cumulative cost of food. This does indicate the local environment could affect food shopping habits.

When mothers were asked to rank the importance of a set of factors when food shopping, Lino and Guthrie (1994) found that more single mothers ranked "how well foods keep" as very important compared with married mothers. Based on 24-hour recalls, single mothers were less likely to consume fruits, vegetables, and milk and their children less likely to consume fruit on a given day than married women and their children. Morris, Neuhauser, and Campbell (1992) reported that 23% of the small and medium food stores that are more prevalent in rural areas did not stock any fresh vegetables, and 33% did not stock any fresh fruits. In those stores that did stock fresh fruits and vegetables, variety was limited and quality was poor. A single mother who receives Food Stamps once a month could be practicing good time management if she shops less frequently. But this pattern, combined with use of stores having a limited variety of fruits and vegetables and concerns about keeping properties, could lead to lower consumption of fruit, vegetables, and milk products by single mother families compared to dual parent families.

Nutritional implications

The pattern of skimping on servings of fruits and vegetables has been verified in larger national surveys. Using data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES II) of 1976-1980, Kant, Block, Schatzkin, Ziegler, and Nestle (1991) found that the proportion of the population reporting no servings from the dairy, fruit, and vegetable groups increased as level of education and income decreased. At that time, only a third of the population reported consuming something from all five food groups. Within the lowest two quartiles of poverty income ratio, 25 to 50% were not getting any servings from the dairy, fruit, and vegetable groups. Subar et al. (1995) conducted a random digit dialing survey of a representative sample of the U.S. population in 1991 to determine how many adults were eating five fruits and vegetables a day. They found that only 23% of the population were getting five servings a day and that the number of fruits and vegetables per day decreased with an increase in levels of poverty or a decrease in level of education. Low income, high poverty, and lower education all contribute to persons eating fewer servings of fruits and vegetables. Eating fewer fruits and vegetables is tied to increased risk of certain chronic diseases, especially cancer. Thus, there are health implications for low-income, high poverty-level, and lesser educated persons who limit their consumption of these foods.

A number of factors appear to contribute to this undesirable eating pattern of single mothers. These women may not be able to shop frequently enough to keep fresh fruits and vegetables available to eat. The choices available in their local food stores may be limited and of poor quality. They may think fresh fruits and vegetables are too expensive or not likely to keep well. They also may not understand the importance of these foods in the diet. Morton and Guthrie (1997) used data from the 1994 Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals and the Diet and Health Knowledge Survey to examine the knowledge of low-income individuals with children about the Food Guide Pyramid recommendations. Low-income respondents with children were less likely than high income respondents to know the recommended number of servings of vegetables and dairy products per day. More low-income respondents than high income respondents rated 'how well food keeps' to be more important than nutrition. These results suggest that many low-income households don't know the daily recommended number of servings of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products and that concern about foods keeping well or price reduces their purchase of fresh fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. However, the data do not clarify the reasoning low-income shoppers use in making food choices on their infrequent shopping trips.

We know very little about the process single mothers use to balance food needs with other needs when household income is insufficient, and we know even less about how divorced women, who must adjust to marital breakup and cope with the reduction in household income, meet their food needs and those of their children. The use of Food Stamps and WIC supplements can help relieve food insecurity, but a mother may also have to change shopping patterns and buying tactics to stretch the budget. She may have to involve her children in food chores to maintain household function. To investigate this process, we examined shopping patterns, purchasing habits, methods of supplementing food availability, and food security then (before the divorce) and now (after the divorce). We also examined meal patterns and involvement of children in food chores now. Finally, we asked open-ended questions to learn why they feel confident or not confident about feeding their family now, how divorce affected their ability to feed their family, what expenses compete with food purchases, what they are doing to cut costs, and the role of friends and relatives in helping to feed their family.

C. Project Goals and Objectives

Goal: Determine the following for a group of single parents from six counties:

- current use of a range of government and community assistance programs (Welfare, Food Stamps, WIC, food banks, shelters, legal services, educational and counseling programs, etc.).
- their opinions of ease of access to, personal need of, and perceived discomfort and stigma associated with these programs.
- their opinions about the effects of workfare on their family and community.
- the types of educational programs about raising their family, dealing with divorce, and family support skills (managing money, cooking, maintaining a job, etc.) of most use to them.
- whether certain education programs should be required of those entering marriage, filing for a divorce, or filing for custody of children, and, if so, what these should be.
- the important attributes of educational programs that would attract their attendance and how these should be advertised.
- the depth of their support systems for tangible help and information support.
- the changes in their food shopping patterns brought on by divorce and the confidence they feel about feeding their family now compared to before their divorce.

Approach: We established six objectives to accomplish this goal.

1. Pilot test and complete the interview guide and related documents.

2. Hire and train three interviewers to conduct the interviews.
3. Solicit 120 divorced, single parents (20 each in six counties), and complete an interview with each.
4. Analyze and compile the quantitative data from the interview guides.
5. Analyze and compare the qualitative data from the taped section of the interviews to the quantitative data.
6. Compile the final report

D. Research Questions

Use of and Attitudes toward Community Assistance Programs

1. What is the pattern of use of community assistance programs now (and in the past) for this group of divorced mothers?
2. What are the attitudes of these women toward groups of assistance programs?
3. What are the attitudes of these women toward workfare?

We examined how this differed for all three questions by
- total time separated from spouse
- household income
- education level
- household structure: other adults, number of children and/or children's age groups (called predominate type of child or household child type in the results).

We also examined how question one was affected by employment pattern and question two and three were affected by education, social support, and experience or no experience with programs.

Educational Needs and Educational Program Attributes

1. What educational programs would be most useful to this group of divorced mothers?
2. How many feel certain educational programs should be required at time of marriage, divorce, or receiving legal custody of children?
3. If such programs should be required, what programs do they suggest?
4. What are the most important attributes of an educational program offering?
5. How should such programs be advertised?

We examined how this differed for all five questions by
- education level
- household structure: other adults and/or children's age groups
- total time separated from spouse
- social support.

We also examined how household income affected questions four and five.

Food Security and Feeding the Family

1. What is the pattern within this group of divorced women now and then (before the divorce) for
- shopping frequency and family member participation
- use of coupons, generic brands and advertised specials
- frequency of gardening, canning, freezing, and using game
- responses to questions about food security?

2. What is the current pattern within this group of divorced mothers for

- frequency of eating at home, in a restaurant, using take-out food, and eating with friends or relatives in a month
- involvement of children in food chores?

We examined how this differed for both questions by

- household income
- household structure: other adults, children's age groups, and/or age of female children
- social support

E. Methods

The Office for Regulatory Compliance of the Pennsylvania State University approved all interactions with human subjects supported by this grant on July 10, 1996.

Interview guide

The interview guide, containing both quantitative, fixed choice questions and qualitative, open-ended questions was developed based on seven cycles of co-investigator review, pilot testing with the target audience, and subsequent revision. Further revisions were made in the quantitative questions after interviewers, conducting training interviews, detected some residual problems with question clarity. Some open-ended questions in the qualitative sections (H, K, and N below) were dropped, and others were revised to clarify the information requested, based on interviewer feedback after 18 interviews were completed. The final interview guide contained the following sections:

A. Human capital of custodial single parent - age, sex, education, employment

B. Household composition - number and characteristics of other adults

C. Number and characteristics of children

D. Interviewee race/marital status

E. Familiarity with/use of public assistance programs - 20 programs

F. Opinions about public assistance programs - four groups of programs

G. Opinions of 'workfare'

H. Opinions of community assistance*

I. Educational program needs - usefulness of 17 topics; programs that should be required at marriage, divorce, or obtaining custody of children

J. Important attributes of an educational program

K. Opinions of educational programs*

L. Community social support network - level of tangible and informational help provided by individuals or groups

M. Feeding the family - shopping and meal patterns, opinions of food security

N. Elements of food security and food exchange*

O. Financial resources - income and status of residence and motor vehicles

* These sections contained open-ended qualitative questions.

The interviewee's responses were tape recorded in the qualitative sections. The first 16 interviews took 2.5 to 3 hours, but after the last qualitative sections revision, the remaining 89 interviews each took 2 to 2.5 hours to complete. (Appendix 1 contains a copy of this interview guide.)

Training interviewers and supervision

Three interviewers each received 12 hours of training that included completion of two supervised training interviews. They received an interview guide prop book that provided either a short explanation for interviewees to consider as they answered a question or listed the choice of answers to that question. The interviewer was to ask each question as printed in the interview guide, use the prop book to show the interviewee their answer options, and record the interviewee's answers in the guide. They also received training in qualitative interviewing technique, tape recorder use, interview record keeping, and interview appointment verification once it was scheduled. One interviewer quit after the training and a replacement was hired and trained. Two interviewers provided feedback on the interview process and question clarity after a total of 18 interviews were completed. The two original and one replacement interviewer completed all 107 interviews.

The project coordinator provided on-going quality control of the interview process. She checked all completed interview guides for omissions and errors, contacting the interviewer and interviewee for corrections or missing data. She also listened to the first six tapes of the qualitative sections completed by each interviewer, to the first six tapes completed after the qualitative questions were shortened, and, then, to randomly selected tapes throughout the interview period. She provided comments to the interviewers, where necessary, to keep the interviewing technique thorough and uniform.

Sample solicitation

We solicited the sample in Fall 1996 from six counties, arranged in three pairs matched for economic and ethnic factors; one county in each pair had a court mandated divorce education program while its matched county had none. To find participants within each county who differed in time divorced and/or separated, we planned to obtain recently divorced volunteers from mandatory divorce education classes in three counties and from 1995-1996 divorce records in the remaining three counties, as well as volunteers who had experienced divorce two or more years before through children and youth agencies in all six counties. Potential participants were to be divorcing or divorced, still single, and have custody of their own minor children (18 years or younger). We developed advertising flyers describing the interview process and who was eligible, to which a business reply postcard was attached. If individuals who received the flyer were interested in participating, they could return the postcard listing their phone number, address, and county to our office at Penn State University.

Initially, flyers were sent to the managers of mandatory divorce education classes in three counties (Huntingdon, Bradford, and Centre) and to case workers at child and youth agencies in all six counties. Managers of divorce education programs described the study and displayed the flyers for interested participants to pick up at the end of the divorce education class. The case workers in the children and youth agencies received instruction in the criteria for sample selection and identified potential candidates from their current cases to whom they gave the flyer and post card. Evaluation of the return rate on postcards two months after starting the solicitation indicated that very few participants from child and youth agencies or divorce education classes were returning postcards. At that point, all further study volunteers were found through flyers mailed to names drawn from the public divorce records in all six counties.

All names and addresses of women receiving divorce decrees in 1995 and 1996 were recovered from divorce records in each county. Where possible, women without minor children (18 years or younger) or who had not received custody of minor children or who did not live in the county were eliminated. No males were included in the sample. All women whose names were recovered from a county were sent a flyer and postcard. Mailings were staggered over four months to concentrate interviews in specific counties and then, within counties, to cluster mailings within an area to facilitate conducting multiple interviews per day and per trip.

The project coordinator screened all women returning postcards, according to eligibility criteria, by telephone. In addition to the criteria of being divorced and still single, the ages of their children were considered in order to construct a sample where half had at least one child 12 years or older. In addition, any permanent separation prior to divorce was not to exceed five years, and the mother was to be responsible for food chores. Then, an interview was scheduled for those matching the criteria.

Interview protocol

After confirming the location, date and time over the telephone, interviewers conducted the interview in the interviewee's home or at a local site suitable to the interviewee (e.g., a county extension office) where they also obtained informed consent from the volunteer. Interviewers read all questions in the interview guide to the interviewee. Answers to quantitative questions were recorded in the interview guide by the interviewer. The interviewer could use standard probes to elicit responses to the qualitative questions, and these answers were recorded on tape. Those completing the interview received a $40 gift certificate for a local supermarket.

Data management and statistical analysis

Quantitative Data (Sections A - G; I - J; L - M; O)

All interview guides were checked for missing or unclear answers and, where possible, the project coordinator called the interviewee to clarify and complete the missing responses. Using a code book, responses were entered into EXCEL® spread sheets and all entries checked for accuracy against the original interview guide responses. Errors found were corrected. Data from the spread sheets were converted into SPSS files and range edits and error checking were conducted prior to analysis. Frequency distributions of continuous and ordinal data were examined for skewedness and found to be near normal.

Independent Variables (Table 1):

Demographic characteristics of the sample were compiled as frequency distributions or mean values. Table 1 shows those demographic characteristics which were our main independent variables (listed under categories of Divorce Status, Human Capital, Household Composition, Experience with Community Assistance, and Social Support).

Households with predominant types of children were identified using the following rules. First, preschool was defined as ages 0 - 6 yr., school age as ages 7 - 12 yr., and teenage as ages 13 or greater. Second, the number of children in each age group was tallied for each household and the following rules applied to the percent in each category:

a) If the percent of preschoolers in a household was equal to or greater than the percent of school age and equal to or greater than the percent of teenagers, then that household became predominately preschooler. If the percents were equal, then the household became the lower age category; if the percents were unequal, the household became a member of the higher age category.

b) If the percent of school age in a household was greater than the percent of preschooler and greater than the percent of teenager, then that household became predominately school age (with the equal rules as above).

c) If the percent of teenagers in a household was greater than the percent of preschoolers and greater than the percent of school age, then that household became predominately teenage (with the equal rules as above).

In addition, we defined two other categories of independent variables, Experience with Community Assistance and Social Support, based on answers to groups of questions.

We assessed experience with each of 20 community programs, using a three-part question, asking in sequence:

a) Does the participant use program X now? (if yes, move to program Y).

b) Have they used program X in the past? (if yes, move to program Y).

c) Are they familiar with program X? (yes or no, move to program Y).

We grouped 14 of the 20 programs as follows:

Group 1 - Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Welfare or general assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), rent assistance, and Food Stamps

Group 2 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), and Head Start

Group 3 - food banks, homeless shelters, and domestic violence shelters

Group 4 - parenting, divorce, money management, and cooking education programs.

Respondents were placed into one of the three experience groups based on their answers to the three-part use question for the designated group of programs. A current user was anyone answering 'yes' to use now for one or more of the programs in the group. Current users could include some who had used one of these programs in the past as well. A past user was anyone of those remaining (after removing current users) who answered 'yes' to use in the past for one or more of the programs in the group. A past user had only used a program in the past. Those with no experience were those remaining.

We measured social support using concepts from Wan, Jaccard, and Ramey (1996), Letiecq, Anderson and Koblinsky (1996), and Dunst, Jenkins, and Trivette (1984). Of the four types of social support demonstrated to be relatively independent by Wan, Jaccard, and Ramey, we focused on tangible and informational support. Tangible support is the provision of money, materials, and skilled work. Informational support is the provision of advice, direction, suggestions, and locations to solve problems. Dunst et al. (1984) developed an 18-item scale that assessed the degree of helpfulness of individuals or groups of people to families. They examined its reliability with a sample of parents with developmentally disabled children and reported an alpha of 0.85 and a split-half reliability of 0.75. Letiecq et al. (1996) used the same scale with a group of low-income mothers, most of whom (over 80%) were single parents, and reported a Chronbach's alpha of 0.81.

We adapted this scale to focus on the help provided by an ex-spouse, former in-laws, a current partner, a current partner's relatives, a current partner's friends (who are not the interviewee's close friends), an interviewee's parents, own children, own relatives, a pastor or other religious authority, professional contacts (counselor, social worker, or teacher), an interviewee's close friends, and acquaintances at work or in social clubs. We used two social support scales in the interview guide, one addressing the tangible help and one addressing the informational help provided by the individuals and groups listed above. Both support scales listed 13 individuals or groups and provided four spaces for listing additional persons (other 1 - 4) the interviewee felt important. The informational support scale also listed the yellow pages as a scale category, based on suggestions made in pilot tests of the interview guide. The interviewer asked the interviewee to rate each individual or group, using a scale of 4 = extremely helpful, 3 = very helpful, 2 = generally helpful, 1 = slightly helpful, 0 = not helpful or does not apply. Interviewers asked the interviewees to distinguish between close friends and acquaintances at work or in social clubs. We established a mean score and a sum score for each respondent for all tangible categories and for all information categories receiving a score of 1 or more. The total sum score possible based on the 13 tangible categories was 52; if additional individuals were volunteered the score could be as high as 68. The corresponding maximum scores for the information scale were 56 and 72, respectively.

Using all categories in the two scales (dropping the 'other' categories), the mean and sum scores for tangible and information were 1.89±0.62, 18±7.08 and 1.68±0.62,18.17±7.55, respectively. There were significant correlations between items within each scale, but only one r^2 reached 41%, and all the rest were 37% or less. In addition, the tangible and informational sum scores and the mean tangible and mean information scores were both highly correlated. Because the individual scales correlated differently with the attitude variables of interest, we decided to use the two social scales independently, despite the fact that the two scales correlated very highly with one another. The initial alphas and split half reliability for each scale were poor, partially because some categories were not used by many people, e.g., ex-spouse and other 1- 4. To improve reliability, we dropped three categories from the tangible scale (ex-spouse, former in-laws, other 1-4) and those three, plus 'yellow pages' from the information scale. The characteristics of the final support scales are shown in Table 16. The maximum sum score possible for these 11-item scales was 44, and the alphas for tangible support and informational support were 0.62 and 0.67, respectively.

Whenever possible, correlation matrices between the tangible support and informational support mean sum scores and the dependent variables of interest were constructed. If no significant correlations were found, we assumed no significant differences would be found if the dependent variable of interest was examined as two groups based on tangible or informational support scores and did no further significance testing. If significant correlations were found, appropriate significance testing was carried out.

Dependent Variables:

- Attitudes toward groups of community assistance programs

We arranged 14 of the 20 community programs into four groups to assess respondents' attitudes about each group. These were the same groups used to determine the independent variable, experience.

Group 1: *Public assistance like AFDC (and Medicaid), general assistance, SSI, Rent (and Heat) Assistance, and Food Stamps.* We included Food Stamps in this group because this program is administered by the general assistance office and the public associates Food Stamps with Welfare. We included SSI and rent and heat assistance because those receiving general assistance are often referred to these federal, state, and county supported programs if they qualify.

Group 2: *Programs like WIC, EFNEP, and Head Start.* Nutrition professionals consider all of these to be food assistance programs that provide for children. WIC provides both food and nutrition education to pregnant women and their young children up to age five. EFNEP provides nutrition education (but not food) to low-income homemakers with children, and Head Start provides both educational opportunities and food (in the form of hot meals) to low-income preschool children and educational experiences, including nutrition education to these children's parents.

Group 3: *County or local food bank, emergency food and shelter programs for the homeless, and domestic violence shelters or programs.* We grouped these together because they each provide short-term assistance (food, shelter, legal assistance) to families or family members in crisis.

Group 4: *Programs that teach a skill for a fee, including those addressing parenting, money management, divorce education, adjustment to divorce, and shopping and cooking.* This group represents educational programs offered by schools, organizations, or cooperative extension that are not part of government supported assistance or feeding programs.

Interviewers read a short statement describing the group of programs and then asked the interviewee whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with a set of 14 statements for each of the first three groups and a subset of 7 statements for group 4. Answers were scored so that strongly agree = 5 and strongly disagree = 1 for 11 statements; 3 statements were reverse coded. A high score indicated positive attitudes.

Confirmatory factor analysis, performed on the responses for the whole sample (N = 106) to each cluster of programs, identified three factors -- stigma, need, and access, that explained 47-58% of the variation for program groups 1-3. For program group 4 (educational programs), the seven statements fell into two factors - access and need which explained 56.3% of the variance with no cross loadings and low correlations. However, there were cross loadings between stigma, need, and sometimes access in program groups 1-3 with moderate correlations among factors.

Correlation matrices were constructed to compare all possible matches of each program group's total scale and subscales, using the total sample (N = 106). These matrices indicated some multi-collinearity between the three total scales and between subscales of program groups 1, 2, and 3. To see if experience (called use and non-use) with these programs affected multi-collinearity, we examined correlation matrices to compare all possible scale and subscale matches for eight groups of respondents; users or non-users of Welfare programs, child feeding programs, emergency programs and educational programs. Comparisons indicated higher correlations between scales and subscales across Welfare, child feeding, and emergency programs for non-users than for users of any of these programs. Correlations between scales and subscales for emergency program users and non-users were lower than those for Welfare and child care users. Correlations were very low between scales and subscales of educational and other programs for educational program users; these were somewhat higher for educational program non-users.

These data suggest that non-users of Welfare, child feeding, and emergency programs have more consistent attitudes toward all three groups of programs than users and that, regardless of experience, respondents distinguish between program group 4 (educational) and all other program groups. Thus, comparing attitude scores between users and non-users was important.

Despite some shared variance, the internal consistency of the total attitude scales and subscales identified by factor analysis were generally very satisfactory (See Table 2). Mean scores for total scales and the three identified subscales were examined for the total group and subgroups based on experience. Analysis of variance was used to determine significant differences among attitudes scores of various groups and two tailed t-tests were used to assess significant differences between pairs of means.

Respondents were asked a set of five opinion questions about the new 'workfare.' For each question, they could choose a response between strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). The alpha coefficient for this group of questions was poor (0.4893), so we examined group scores on individual questions. Significant differences between mean scores were tested by one-way analysis of variance, contrast coefficient matrices, and two tailed t-tests.

We also examined the effects of income, education, time apart, support scale score, household structure, household child type, and experience groups on total and subscale attitude scores and individual workfare questions for the total group (N = 107). Significant differences between mean scores were tested by one way analysis of variance and two tailed t-tests.

Differences were assumed significant at $p \leq 0.01$ for N = 107 and at $p \leq 0.05$ for smaller Ns.

- Educational program topics, educational attributes and advertising channels

Usefulness of different educational program topics was examined using mean scores and frequency distributions based on a scoring system where 1 = not useful, 2 = somewhat useful, 3 = useful, and 4 = very useful, first for the entire sample, and then, for groupings based on educational level, time apart, household structure (adults and predominate type of child), and social support. Significant differences between means were tested using one-way analysis of variance and contrast coefficient matrices.

Frequency distributions of responses to requiring any educational programs at three life cycle events were examined for the entire sample, and by time apart, education level, household structure, and social support groupings. Significant differences were tested using two tailed t-tests (to compare mean yes/no distributions among the three events for the total sample), one-way analysis of variance (to compare mean yes/no distributions between variable sub groupings at each event), and the non-parametric McNemar test (to compare yes/no distributions for one subgroup for all three events) .

The importance of educational program attributes was examined using frequencies and mean scores based on a scoring system of 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, and 4 = very important. For one comparison, the percentage who answered either very important or important and also said 'yes, this would make them more likely to participate', was calculated. The effects of income, education level, time apart, household structure, household child type, and social support groupings were examined and significant differences determined by one-way analysis of variance and contrast coefficient matrices.

Importance of various advertising channels was examined using frequencies and mean scores based on the scoring system of 1 = not likely, 2 = somewhat likely, and 3 = very likely. The effects of educational level, income, household structure, and household child type groupings were tested for significance with one-way analysis of variance and contrast coefficient matrices.

Differences were assumed significant at $p \leq 0.01$ for $N = 107$ and at $p \leq 0.05$ for smaller Ns.

- Food habits, eating patterns, food security, and child involvement in food chores

In this section of the interview guide, for some questions, respondents were asked first, what they did now (after the divorce), and second, what they did then (before the divorce when they were still married). (The comparison, now and then, is called now vs. then in later sections.) Responses to questions about number of shopping trips now vs. then, and evening meals, restaurant meals, take out meals, meals with relatives, and meals with friends now were compiled as mean times per month. Responses to six questions about use of coupons, generic brands, and ads or circulars when grocery shopping now vs. then, were compiled as frequencies and as mean scores based on a scoring pattern where 'on every shopping trip' = 1 and almost never or rarely = 4. Responses to questions about who goes shopping now vs. then, questions about owning a freezer, raising a garden, canning or freezing food, and serving game now vs. then, and whether children participate in various food chores now were compiled as frequencies. Responses to a set of four food security questions now vs. then, were compiled as frequencies and as mean scores based on a scoring system that always assigned a value of 1 to the most secure (first) choice and 4 or 5 (depending on the number of choices) to the least desirable choice. These food security questions asked about the amount of money available to spend on food, amount of food available, running low on food because of lack of money, and how confident one feels about being able to provide food for the family (called the MFLC group).

The questions about who shops now vs. then, were organized into two new variables - whoshop2 now and whoshop2 then. These variables identified the households where only the mother shopped, the households where children were involved in shopping with an adult, and all other households. We also attempted to group the freezing, canning, and gardening (FCG) now vs. then questions alone or with the coupon, generic, and circular (CGC) questions as a scale. None of these groupings produced decent measures of internal consistency (alphas). However, when we grouped the four food security questions (the MFLC group) now and again for then, the internal consistency alphas were excellent; MFLC now = 0.77, and MFLC then = 0.83. However, most of our comparisons were done with mean responses to individual food security questions.

The effects of income, household structure, household child type, social support, and female children groupings on all variables were examined. Significant differences between mean scores now vs. now and then vs. then were determined, using a one-way analysis of variance and contrast coefficient matrices. Significant differences between mean scores of now vs. then were determined using two tailed t-tests. For those dichotomous variables expressed as frequencies now and then, significant differences were determined using the nonparametric McNemar test which is interpretable as a Chi-Square test.

Differences were assumed significant at $p \leq 0.01$ for $N = 107$ and at $p \leq 0.05$ for smaller Ns.

Qualitative Data (Sections H, K, N)

Only 105 of 107 interviews were tape recorded due to technical difficulties. All taped data were transcribed into Microsoft Word, text only files. Each transcript was separated into three sections, reflecting the three qualitative sections in the interview guide. Then, using Folio Views version 3.1 for the Macintosh, a software information base manager (Folio Corporation, 1995), each section was placed in a data base file for each county, producing three files addressing section H, K, and N, respectively, per county.

Data in section H were divided into opinions and experience with Welfare and then child feeding programs. Interviewees first expressed their opinions about these programs and then, if they had experience with any of the programs in question, described their experience with those programs. If they had reported no experience, the questions about experience were not asked. Each also described how others viewed program users and what programs could help single parents avoid using Welfare.

In section K, respondents indicated first what experience they had with educational programs. Then they described the most important educational programs to provide for single parents, the reasons single parents don't attend such programs, and the most convenient location for such programs. Finally they indicated what might make them uncomfortable at an educational program.

In section N, respondents were first reminded of their answer to two quantitative questions about their confidence in feeding their family now and in the past. Then they explained what made them feel confident or not confident now, and what was different about the past. They indicated what costs compete for money needed for food and what creative things they do now to insure their family has enough to eat all month. Finally, they described the roles other people play in feeding their family now. The interviewer probed for the role of relatives, friends, and neighbors.

Two coders working in parallel established a coding scheme, using data from four transcripts completed after final revisions of the qualitative questions. This scheme emphasized specific themes within the replies (e.g., disapproval, envy, etc.). The initial coding scheme was expanded as more transcripts were coded but became stable when a third of the transcripts had been coded. Previous transcripts were re-examined to include data for new coding categories as they were added. Coding categories were unique and did not overlap.

To check inter-coder agreement, groups of three transcripts were pulled randomly and coded independently by two coders. Coding was compared and instances of agreement and disagreement were recorded. Disagreements were discussed and joint agreement reached on the coding category. Coding was compared three times over a month, each time using three transcripts, and then again using one. The coding categories were considered sufficiently defined when the inter-coder agreement reached a minimum of 80% for the majority of categories. One coder then randomly pulled two transcripts that she had coded a month previously and recoded these. Intra-coder agreement was 90% or greater. This coder completed coding the remaining transcripts. The coding categories identified on paper transcripts were then applied to the computer data base using Folio Views.

Analysis of the data base files was done using Boolean key word searches organized under major themes (e.g., positive opinions of Welfare). Text from searches of section H was analyzed by two reviewers who compared the text within a county to subsequent counties, gradually building a description of themes for all six counties. The reviewers compared their findings and then wrote a joint summary. One reviewer read and synthesized the summary of text from searches in Section K and N. In each section, in addition to examining data by county, data base information was also divided into certain groups for comparison. In section H (Welfare and child feeding programs), responses to what single parents need to avoid welfare were compared between those with experience and without experience with Welfare programs. In section K (educational programs), responses to questions about programs needed were compared for those with differing educational levels (high school or less vs. more than high school) and responses to all questions were compared between the two time separated groups (<2.5 yr. vs. ≥ 2.5 yr.). In section N (food patterns and food security), responses about rules for competing costs, creative things, and food exchange were compared between those reporting they were confident now and those reporting they were not confident now. In this section, we also examined overlap of rules for handling bills or costs that competed with food costs (e.g., how many reported multiple rules vs. only one) and how rules of exchange were applied to food exchanged with relatives.

V. Results

Postcard Return and Interview Completion Rates

We completed 15 interviews with volunteers located through divorce education classes (7 interviewees) and children and youth Agencies (8 interviewees). Based on the distribution of 900 flyers to these agencies, this represents a 2% response rate. The response rate from flyers mailed to names obtained from divorce records varied by county because the contents of divorce records were not consistent across counties (See Table 3). It was possible only in one county, Bedford, to determine the presence of minor children and women who had custody. Thus, most county mailings were inflated with names of women who had no children or did not have custody. About 14% of all flyers mailed were undeliverable. The response rate varied greatly across the counties with that from Columbia being the lowest. The overall response rate from flyers was 12%, and the subsequent interview completion rate was about 8%, indicating how difficult it was to contact and attract this target audience. A total of 107 divorced women completed interviews. Taping of two interviews failed, so 105 qualitative transcripts were analyzed.

Demographic Characteristics of the Interviewees.

The demographic characteristics of the interviewees, their children, and other household members are summarized in Tables 4-6. Beginning on the left, each table lists the variables, the initial categories of each, the interviewee distribution within those initial categories, and, finally, the groupings of the interviewees in condensed categories representing the independent variables.

This group of women is not a representative sample of all divorced women. It is a focused sample of divorced mothers with minor children. We will call this group a 'sample', but the reader must realize that this is a volunteer sample and not a random sample. Our sample was 99% white and all female with a mean age of 36 years (See Table 4). Only 37% of this sample had any education beyond high school. Sixty two percent were working full time, and almost 80% were self-employed or working full or part time. Two thirds of those working part time held two or more jobs. Fifty two percent listed blue collar or service jobs, and 45% listed skilled jobs such as accountants and teachers. Fifty seven percent of this sample had incomes of $20,000 or less, and 95.5% had incomes of $39,000 or less. Only one household did not have a car. About 40% rented their residence, and another 40% owned solely or jointly and were making payments on a home. Three quarters of this sample were receiving child support. The mean value for years lived in the county of the respondents was nearly 23 years.

The majority (95%) were divorced and still single. Only a few were separated and divorcing. Over 90% were permanently separated prior to divorce, and the mean length of marriage was about 11 years. Mean length of time separated (time divorced ± time permanently separated) was three years. Fifty three percent had been living apart from their ex-spouse for at least 2.5 years or more. These women reported having about four close friends (mean value). Their mean level of tangible support was 15.5/44 and of informational support was 13.6/44.

Slightly over half of these women (57%) had several children (See Table 5). Forty percent of these households had no female children and 23% no male children. About 44% of these households had teenage children present, and 38% had preschool children present.

Although these women were still single, 32% lived with other adults (See Table 6), and 42% of these other adults were a significant other (SO). More than half of these SOs were employed, full or part time, or self-employed. But 35% were unemployed, and 75% had, at most, a high school education. A smaller portion

(25%) of these divorced women lived with a parent or grandparent. About 15% lived with their own child over age 18.

Use of Community Assistance Programs

The women were asked a set of four questions about each of 20 community assistance programs. Their responses to the first three questions allowed us to assess how many in this sample were using a program now, who had used the program in the past, and who had never used the program. Those who had never used the program were asked if they were familiar with it. If the response was 'yes', we asked if they would be very likely, somewhat likely, or not likely to use the program if they qualified for or needed it. The results from this group of questions are shown in Table 7.

Only a few of these 20 programs were used heavily at the time by this sample of divorced women. The most used service was the county domestic relations office where 66% of these women received help with child support. The next four most used programs were Welfare or general assistance (34%), Food Stamps (22%), individual and family counseling services (18%), and SSI (11%). Fewer than 10% used any of the remaining 15 programs.

However, more of these programs were used in the past. Over 30% of the sample had used Welfare, Food Stamps, WIC, individual and family counseling services, and job training programs. Over 20% had used the local food bank, domestic violence shelters, divorce education programs, and career development programs.

Three quarters or more of the sample had never used SSI (88%), rent assistance (79%), EFNEP (90%), Head Start (79%), emergency food and shelter programs (94%), county children and youth services (78%), support groups (82%), parenting education (82%), money management (92%), food (91%), and career development programs (75%) or 11 of the 20 programs. In general, support groups, educational programs, and career development programs were used very infrequently by this sample.

In Table 7, the number who had never used a given program is listed in the fourth column; the number of never users who were familiar with the program is listed directly below in the same column. The number (and percent) of those familiar with the program who are very likely and somewhat likely to use the program is listed in the final column. Among the 11 least used programs, less than 30% of the sample were familiar with EFNEP, parenting education, money management, food, and career development programs. Among these 11 programs, if women were familiar with them, over 70% reported that they would be likely to use the program if they qualified or needed it except for EFNEP and food shopping, storage, and cooking programs. These data suggested that lack of knowledge or awareness of programs may be one of the main reasons they are not used.

We also examined how stratifying the sample by time separated (separated less than 2.5 years vs. separated 2.5 or more years) affected pattern of use now and in the past and how stratifying the sample by income ($20,000 or less vs. $20,001 or more), work pattern (unemployed, part time, full time, and self-employed), household structure (mother living alone vs. with other adults), and household child type (predominately preschool vs. all others) affected use now. No significant differences were found (data not shown), although it was clear that more of those with lower incomes or who were unemployed were using general assistance, SSI, rent assistance, and Food Stamps. More of those with preschoolers were using WIC.

Table 8 shows the pattern of use of groups of specific programs now and in the past. General assistance programs (Welfare) were used most heavily of any group now, and a number of women used multiple programs. In the past, the numbers using the four groups of programs were similar and at or above the highest use now. Table 9 shows how the sample distributed among experience categories (use now, used in the past, never used) for each group of programs as defined in the Methodology section and Table 1. The distribution among experience categories was about equal only for general assistance; for the other groups of programs, numbers in use now were much lower than in the other two categories.

Attitudes toward Groups of Assistance Programs

The women were read 11 positive statements for each group of programs and asked if they agreed or disagreed with each. These answers were scored strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. They were asked three negative statements which were scored strongly disagree = 5, disagree = 4, etc. The higher the score on the 14 attitude questions, the more positive the women's opinion of those programs. Table 10 displays the ranking of the total sample (N = 107) for the total attitude scale, three subscales, and four individual questions for each of four groups of programs. Ranking is in decreasing order of significant differences in positive attitude scores. (See Table 10 in Appendix 2 for the actual mean values and significance levels.)

The mean scores on the total scale indicated that this sample held the most positive opinions about child feeding and Welfare programs. They were significantly less positive about emergency programs and educational programs. The women were significantly more positive about access to child feeding programs than about access to either Welfare or emergency programs and significantly more neutral about access to educational programs. The need subscale asked about women's need of these programs now, in the future, and in the past. The women were significantly more likely to agree about their need for

Welfare programs or educational programs than for child feeding or emergency programs.

We examined stigma and comfort level for three groups of programs, omitting educational programs. The stigma scale included three statements: I would feel ashamed of using these programs while living in this community; my children would be made fun of by other children in this area if I used these programs; and my family would be looked down on by others in this area if I used these programs. Scoring was reversed so that strongly disagree = 5. Results show that the women disagreed with these statements significantly less for Welfare, and significantly more for child feeding programs. Opinions of emergency programs were intermediate and significantly different from the other two program groups. This suggests that these women associated the most stigma with Welfare programs, an intermediate amount with emergency programs, and the least with child feeding programs. This was confirmed by the response to question 9: I would be comfortable telling local people (who are not close friends) that I use these programs. The women were least comfortable about Welfare programs, more comfortable about emergency programs, and most comfortable about telling local people they used child feeding programs.

Mean responses to question 8 (I am comfortable with the amount of personal information that I would provide to enroll in these programs) were not significantly different and indicate these women felt the same level of comfort with information needed regardless of the programs. They were significantly less likely to agree with question 10 for Welfare and emergency programs than for child feeding programs, indicating relatives were less likely to approve of use of Welfare or emergency programs relative to child feeding programs. The mean response to question 11 was not significantly different among programs and indicated the women felt their close friends approve equally of their use of any of these three groups of programs.

We examined the effect of the following independent variables on these scale scores; time separated (separated less than 2.5 yr. vs. separated 2.5 yr. or more, hereafter designated as <2.5 yr. vs. ≥ 2.5 yr.); educational level (GED or less; high school; more than high school); household structure (mother living alone vs. with other adults); income ($20,000 or less vs. $20,001 or more, hereafter designated as ≤ $20,000 vs. ≥ $20,001); number and type of children, a) 1 child or 2 or more, b) predominately preschool vs. all others); and more and less tangible and informational support. Three variables significantly affected certain attitude total scale and need subscale scores (See Table 10a in Appendix 2). *Household income* had the most impact on attitude scores for Welfare and child feeding programs; those with lower incomes had significantly more positive total and need subscale scores than those with higher incomes. Those with *predominately preschool children* had significantly more positive total and need subscale scores for child feeding programs than households with older children. Those *living alone* had significantly more positive opinions about educational programs than those living with other adults. Social support scores correlated significantly only with attitudes toward emergency programs and question 10 of the Welfare programs.

We re-examined the respective total scores and subscale scores in Table 10, indirectly controlling for income, household child type (predominately preschool vs. all others) and social support. Table 10b shows the results when we examined the attitudes for two income groups, ≤ $20,000 per year and ≥ $20,001 per year. (The actual mean values and significance levels are shown in Table 10b in Appendix 2.) These were as follows:

- For the total scale, the low income group had significantly more positive attitudes about Welfare and child feeding programs than about the other two programs and were significantly more positive about emergency than about educational programs. Among the higher income group, attitudes toward child feeding programs were significantly more positive than for the other three.

- For the access subscale, both the low income and higher income group were significantly more positive about child feeding programs than Welfare, and both were significantly more neutral about educational programs than any of the other three. Only the low income group was significantly less positive about emergency programs than child care programs.
- For the need subscale, the low income group felt significantly more need for Welfare programs than any other group of programs. They expressed significantly more need for educational programs than emergency programs. Their need of child feeding programs was not significantly different from that of emergency or educational programs. The higher income group felt significantly more need for educational programs than for child feeding or emergency programs. Their need of Welfare programs was not significantly different from that of child feeding and educational programs.
- For the stigma subscale, both income groups felt significantly less stigma was associated with child feeding programs than either Welfare or emergency programs. The higher income group also felt significantly less stigma was associated with emergency programs than Welfare programs.
- For the individual questions, both income groups were equally comfortable with the information requirements of all three groups of programs. Both were significantly more comfortable telling others of their use of child feeding programs than either of the other groups of programs, but the higher income group felt more comfortable about emergency programs than Welfare. Significantly more of the low income group agreed that relatives were more likely to approve of use of either Welfare or child feeding programs than emergency programs. Significantly more of the higher income group agreed that relatives were more likely to approve of use of

the child feeding programs than of Welfare but did not distinguish approval of emergency programs from that of the other two programs. Significantly more of the low income group felt close friends were more likely to approve of use of child feeding and Welfare programs than of emergency programs, while significantly more of the higher income group felt close friends were more likely to approve of child feeding than Welfare programs. Once again, the higher income group did not distinguish approval of emergency programs from that of the other two programs.

When we examined attitudes for groups defined by household child type (predominately preschool vs. others), we found the following as displayed in Table 10c (See Table 10c in Appendix 2 for the actual mean values and significance levels.):

- For the total scale, those with preschoolers had significantly more positive attitudes toward child feeding programs than any other program, while 'others' had the most positive attitudes toward Welfare, intermediate attitudes toward emergency programs, but were significantly more neutral about educational programs. Their attitudes toward child feeding programs was significantly different from those toward education programs, but not significantly different from those toward Welfare or emergency programs.
- For the access subscale, the attitude patterns were the same in the two groups, and child feeding programs were rated significantly more accessible than Welfare or emergency programs. They were significantly more neutral about educational programs.
- For the need subscale, those with preschoolers had significantly more (and equal) need for Welfare, child feeding and educational programs than for emergency programs. The 'others' had significantly more need for Welfare and educational programs than for child feeding or emergency programs.

- For the stigma subscale, both groups indicated significantly less stigma was associated with child feeding programs than with either Welfare or emergency programs. Only the 'others' rated the stigma associated with emergency programs as less than that of Welfare.
- For question 8, both household groups felt equally comfortable with the information needed by these three program groups.
- For question 9, those with preschoolers felt significantly more comfortable telling local people about using child feeding programs than either Welfare or emergency program use. The 'others' were significantly more comfortable talking about child feeding program use than about emergency program use and significantly more comfortable talking about emergency than Welfare program use.
- For question 10, those with preschoolers reported no difference in relative approval of use of any of the three programs. Significantly more of the 'others' felt relatives were more positive about child feeding programs than Welfare or emergency programs.
- For question 11, significantly more of those with preschool children felt friends would approve Welfare use than emergency program use. No significant differences were found between responses about child feeding and Welfare programs. The 'others' expressed no differences among program groups.

When attitudes were examined using groupings by social support scale scores those with more tangible support had more positive attitudes about emergency programs, and they were significantly more comfortable about the amount of personal information that they would have to provide to enroll. There was no clear distinction between the information support groups. (See Table 10d in Appendix 2.)

In summary, differences in income clearly contributed to differences in the total and need subscale ratings among programs. Low income women were significantly more likely to have positive attitudes toward both Welfare and child feeding programs, while higher income women were most positive about child feeding programs. Low income women were significantly more in need of Welfare programs while higher income women were more needy of educational programs. Income did not contribute to differences in access subscale ratings. Both income groups were significantly more positive about access to child feeding programs, had intermediate opinions about access to Welfare and emergency programs, and were significantly more neutral about access to educational programs. However, examining differences in income did not eliminate the differential evaluation of the stigma associated with child feeding programs compared to Welfare programs. Both income groups made this distinction for this subscale as well as for question 9, feeling comfortable telling people about use of the program. Only the higher income group associated significantly different levels of stigma with program groups. They associated the most with Welfare, an intermediate amount with emergency programs, and the least with child feeding programs. Their comfort in telling others about using programs also increased sequentially from Welfare to emergency to child feeding programs. This distinction between the low and higher income groups was also evident for relatives' and friends' approval of use of programs. The low income group felt relatives and friends would not make distinctions between their use of Welfare and child feeding programs but would be less likely to approve of use of emergency programs. Significantly more of the higher income group indicated that relatives and friends would make distinctions between use of child feeding and Welfare programs.

The differences seen in groups defined by household child type were both similar and different from those of income. For the total scale, women with preschoolers were significantly more positive about child feeding programs than any other program, while 'others' were significantly more positive about Welfare, followed by emergency programs, and significantly more neutral about educational programs. Women with preschoolers had greater need for Welfare, child feeding, and educational programs, while ‘others’ had greater need only for Welfare and educational programs. Results for access were identical to those for income groups and the total group. Once again women with preschoolers indicated child feeding programs carried less stigma than the other two programs while the ‘others’ indicated differential levels of stigma decreasing from Welfare to emergency to child feeding programs. This pattern was also evident in ratings of comfort in telling people about use. Women with preschoolers did not indicate any difference in relatives’ approval for the three programs, but a significant number of ‘others’ felt relatives would approve of child feeding programs more than Welfare or emergency programs. In contrast, significantly more women with preschoolers felt friends would approve of Welfare than emergency programs, while the ‘others’ made no distinctions among the three groups of programs.

We then examined attitudes toward these four groups of programs (Welfare, child feeding, emergency, and educational programs) based on experience (use now, used in past, never used). Table 11 shows the results for the Welfare group. Current users were significantly more positive about Welfare programs than either past users or never users. Attitudes about access to these Welfare programs did not differ significantly by experience. Attitudes about need varied significantly between experience of the groups; need was stronger in present users, less in past users, and the least in never users. Current users felt that there was significantly less stigma associated with these programs than past users. Although past users felt there was more stigma associated with these programs than never users, the difference was not significant. Although there were no significant differences among user groups for questions 8, 9, and 10, the pattern in questions 9 and 10 suggested that comfort with local peoples’ opinions and approval of relatives drops among past and never users of the programs. Current users agreed significantly more than past users or never users that their close friends approved of their use of the program. Among this sample, current users had the highest perceived need for Welfare programs, and they felt there was less stigma attached to use, perhaps because more of them felt their close friends approved of the use of these programs.

Table 12 presents the variation in attitudes about the child feeding programs by experience. Current users and past users were significantly more positive about this group of programs than never users. Current and past users felt significantly more positive about access than never users. Perceived need was significantly higher among current users than past users and significantly higher among past users than never users. Current users perceived significantly less stigma associated with the use of these programs than never users. However, significantly more past users felt comfortable with the amount of information they must provide than never users, and both current users and past users agreed significantly more often that their relatives approved of their use of these programs than never users.

Table 13 presents the variation in attitudes about emergency assistance programs by experience. Current users and past users were significantly more positive about these programs than never users. Past users were significantly more positive about access than never users. Both current users and past users perceived significantly more personal need for these programs. Attitudes about stigma did not vary significantly among experience groups, but when current users and past users were combined, those with experience perceived significantly less stigma associated with these programs than never users. Significantly more of both current and past users were comfortable about the information they must provide to enroll than never users. Significantly more current users were comfortable telling local people about using this group of programs than never users. No other responses differed significantly by experience.

We found no significant differences among experience groups regarding access and need for educational programs (See Table 14). This held true even when we combined current users and past users into one group and compared their scores to those of the never users. Our respondents were nearly neutral about educational programs.

In sum, attitudes of users were significantly more positive toward the Welfare, child feeding or emergency program groups than those of non-users (See Tables 11-14 summary). The factors that most influenced these differences in attitudes were perceptions of need and stigma. In almost all cases, users (now and/or in the past) of Welfare, child feeding, and emergency programs perceived a greater need and less stigma than never users. Positive attitudes of users toward access significantly influenced attitudes toward child feeding and emergency programs. Not surprisingly, significantly more of those using Welfare and child feeding programs now agreed that their need was greater compared to the other user groups. Significantly more never users agreed there was stigma associated with child feeding and emergency programs than either group of users. But significantly more past users of Welfare programs agreed there was stigma associated with these programs than did present users or never users.

The pattern of significant differences among experience group responses to the comfort and approval questions varied between program groups. The approval of close friends contributed to more positive attitudes for users of Welfare, while comfort with the amount of information required and the approval of relatives contributed to more positive attitudes for users of child feeding programs. Feeling comfortable telling local people about the use of emergency programs and providing the information required may have contributed to more positive attitudes among users of emergency programs.

Attitudes Toward Workfare

Table 15 shows the responses to our workfare questions by the total sample and by Welfare experience groups (use now, used in past, and never used). The total sample felt prepared to support their family as the new rules take effect, but current Welfare users felt significantly less prepared than past or never users. The total sample was uncertain of the effect of the new rules on the competition for jobs, but significantly more current users agreed with this statement than never users. The total sample and all three experience groups agreed that there will be a greater need for subsidized child care. The total sample and all three experience groups were unsure of the effect of the new rules on community acceptance of workfare. However, the total sample tended to disagree with the statement that the new rules will make use more acceptable to their parents; current users were significantly more likely to disagree with this statement than past users.

We examined the effect of the independent variables of time separated (< 2.5 yr. vs. ≥ 2.5 yr.), educational level (GED or less; high school; more than high school), household structure (mother living alone vs. with other adults), income (≤$20,000 vs. ≥ $20,001 or more), and social support on mean responses to the workfare questions. Only educational level and social support groups (See Tables 15a and 15b in Appendix 2) significantly affected response patterns. Significantly more of those with education beyond high school felt prepared to support their children with the new rules. Significantly more of those with a GED or less agreed they would face competition for local jobs than those with at least a high school education. Educational level did not significantly affect responses to the remaining questions. Significantly more of those with higher informational support scores agreed that the new rules would make it more acceptable in the community to receive Welfare assistance. The same trend was seen for those with higher tangible support scores vs. lower tangible support scores, although the difference was not significant.

In summary, current Welfare users and those with less than a high school education were more likely to feel unsure they could support their families under the new rules. These individuals were also more likely to agree that the new rules would increase competition for local jobs. Those with more informational support were more likely to agree that these new rules would make it more acceptable in the community to receive Welfare assistance.

Results from Qualitative Analysis of Section H: General Assistance and Child Feeding Programs

(More detailed summaries of findings are in Appendix 3.)

- **General Assistance or Welfare** *(including AFDC, SSI, Rent Assistance, and Food Stamps)*

Assistance opinions and experiences

Our interviewees expressed both positive and negative opinions about general assistance, but only those having used these programs were asked to describe their experience. The weight of opinion and experience was fairly negative. Many of our interviewees had strong beliefs or expectations about who should qualify for assistance and how people who receive it should use it. These expectations appeared to determine how they reacted to recipients who were compared to these expectations and, if found wanting, became the object of intense stigma. The discussion and envy ignited by continued observation of unacceptable recipient behavior kept stigma alive and appeared to be an important leveling device, enabling poorer non-recipients of assistance to distinguish themselves from recipients, thus raising their status in their own eyes.

A majority of our sample (86%) held the opinion that these programs were needed but should be strictly regulated. The regulations or rules outlined by those voicing these opinions were that --

- only those in need should get assistance. Permissible situations were identified.
- abusers who did not really qualify should be removed from the program.
- all on the program should be looking for a job or getting training.
- assistance should be short term -- a hand up, not a hand out.

About 12% of interviewees suggested rules that should be applied to those seeking assistance. These included tough checks on qualifications and stricter regulations of how Food Stamps could be used. A few suggested that assistance should be a loan and that recipients be prohibited from having additional children. While these were isolated comments, they illustrated the vehemence of negative opinions.

Some expectations were fueled by disappointment and envy. Some of our interviewees (15%) were jealous of Welfare recipients and angered by recipients 'misusing' Food Stamps or having possessions that did not reflect a 'lower status.' About 12% of interviewees reported not being eligible for benefits they thought they deserved.

When those receiving assistance did not meet the behavioral expectations of others, especially those struggling for survival in depressed areas, certain negative beliefs or myths surfaced. The six found in these interviews were:

- many people are on assistance that don't need it.

- it's too easy to get general assistance (an interesting contradiction to those who felt they were excluded but deserved assistance).
- Welfare was a way of life for generations of certain families.
- women have babies to stay on Welfare.
- people abused Food Stamps, spending these for non-essentials like cigarettes and 'junk food' or for expensive foods like steak, instead of hamburger.
- those on Welfare did not want to work.

In only a few cases did interviewees state 'real experience or observations' to support these beliefs. These beliefs supported the application of stigma.

Over three quarters (78%) of our interviewees expressed negative opinions about general assistance or Welfare that were classified as being about stigma. This stigma was applied by immediate family members, acquaintances, and the community as a whole based on

- public use of benefits e.g., Food Stamps or the medical card,
- where the recipient lived, or
- the family history of the recipient.

However, among those with positive opinions about community treatment of those receiving assistance, these two patterns stood out:

- Interviewees from three counties (Tioga, Huntingdon, and Bedford) felt those on assistance were not treated any differently because being on assistance was such a common experience.

- Stigma was applied differentially. Those who really needed it were not stigmatized, but those who abused it were. (Unless one is personally familiar with a case, such differential treatment is probably limited.)

This suggested that, under poor economic conditions, those not on assistance used stigma to lower the status of those on it. Stigma was used to simulate a level playing field when people, who felt they deserve help, were excluded from 'preferential treatment.' It was also applied by those who were struggling and did not want a 'handout' to those they perceived to be 'getting a handout', which conferred unfair advantage on the recipient. Stigmatization allowed non-recipients to elevate their status relative to recipients.

Despite the stigma associated with receiving assistance, the experience of our divorced mothers was positive in that :

- 50% of our interviewees reported that the tangible (cash, Food Stamps, medical card, rent assistance, fuel assistance) benefits were needed, very helpful, and appreciated.
- 27% of our interviewees reported helpful, patient, accessible Welfare office staff. The descriptor "easy" was used over and over again by Tioga respondents to describe the process of enrolling and receiving assistance.

However, the experience of our divorced mothers was negative in that:

- 28% of the interviewees reported onerous paperwork, demeaning reporting and documentation requirements, and unpleasant attitudes from Welfare office staff. Huntingdon respondents especially complained about the paperwork requirements.

- 26% of our interviewees perceived the rules of eligibility to be unfair or a trap. One could never get ahead or off assistance because any extra earnings immediately lowered one's benefits.
- 31% of our interviewees reported unpleasant personal experiences in grocery stores or banks or stigmatizing of their children. A number gave very plausible explanations of some of the very behaviors that spark resentment in those not on assistance.

Programs to avoid Welfare

We asked all interviewees what skills they or other single parents would need to avoid using Welfare. Their answers expressed the need for tools or skills that would enable them to find employment and an improved economic position. The majority of responses demonstrated that many of these women had already given consideration to what might improve their economic position. These are the themes that emerged from our analysis of their answers:

- *Development of Necessary Beliefs about Oneself.* (38% of sample)

Our interviewees felt that divorced, single parents need to learn that they are responsible for supporting their family rather than relying solely on assistance. They also need to improve their self-esteem. Both a sense of responsibility and improved self-esteem are essential to absorbing job skills and obtaining employment.

- *Practical Assistance,* in the form of

- free, subsidized, or cheaper child care to counter low wages (41% of sample)
- transportation assistance (13% of sample; mentioned exclusively in Huntingdon, Centre, and Tioga counties)
- education and training to obtain employment (48% of sample)

- career development (22% of sample) to assess skills and interests, provide direction for a job search and assistance in looking for a job, in preparing a resume, in interviewing, and in conducting oneself on the job. Divorce forced many of these women to find their first job, and they felt unsure of where to start.
- guidance to available assistance and support (13%). Support was variously defined as programs that provide security in case something goes wrong, help in learning a new place (role) in life, or help in redefining oneself and building self-sufficiency.
- increased availability of employment (13%) paying a living wage. Some respondents said the available jobs do not pay enough to enable people to avoid Welfare. According to one interviewee --

> "You can't go find a job to survive on at minimum wage. And the majority of the employment around here is minimum wage."

This was echoed by some women who wanted employers to pay 'decent wages' and provide benefits, including insurance for children.

• *Personal Assistance* or instruction addressing problems that could affect their ability to perform waged work. These included

- stress and time management (10% of sample). Divorced, single parents face looking for a job or working and having to care for the family and home alone.
- parenting and home economics skills (17%) to address discipline, handling teenagers, looking for good child care, and nutrition and cooking on a budget.
- budgeting and money management (37%) so one can live on limited means and still save money.

We divided the comments about avoiding Welfare into those of interviewees having experience with Welfare (71) and those with no experience (34). Both groups made similar numbers and types of comments about the need for budgeting skills, guidance in life choices and affordable child care, and the role of confidence and self-esteem in avoiding Welfare. However, the two groups differed in expressing the need for more jobs, transportation, parenting skills, and education and training. More of those with Welfare experience reported a need for more jobs, transportation, and parenting skills. More of those with no Welfare experience voiced the need for education and training.

- ***Child Feeding Programs*** *(including WIC, EFNEP, Head Start)*

Again, all our interviewees expressed opinions about the child feeding programs. Only those having experience with these programs were asked to describe their experience.

WIC opinions and experiences

In contrast to Welfare, the rules governing WIC seemed to produce recipient behavior that was closer to public expectation of those on an assistance program. Although both positive and negative comments were made, the majority were positive. In the opinions of our interviewees, the WIC program was widely approved by friends and relatives as well as members of the community because

- the voucher system prevented exchange of money and restricted benefits to foods viewed as nutritious.
- the program provided expensive foods that many low income mothers cannot afford and nutrition education they need.
- the community lacked high paying jobs and many needed WIC benefits.
- the guidelines were more generous and allowed participants to work.
- the program benefited young children, who were not responsible for their situation.
- many people in the community used the program.

Because the program limited benefits to certain foods, limited participation to very young children, and made it easier for recipients to work, thus supplementing income rather than replacing it, recipients were more likely to meet public expectations. The public and private discussion that seemed to generate stigma did not occur as often.

On the negative side, some interviewees voiced opinions of the WIC program similar to Welfare. They felt that WIC should be used only by those who need it and not by those who abuse it, that WIC was unnecessary with the availability of Welfare and Food Stamps, and that their close friends and relatives had reservations about public money being spent on WIC. Some felt a differential stigma applied to WIC. The stigma was not as bad as that associated with Welfare, but there was less acceptance than if one was entirely self supporting. About 14% of interviewees reported that the community treated WIC recipients poorly and applied some of the same stereotypes associated with Welfare to WIC recipients, particularly in the grocery store.

Many interviewees reported positive experiences with WIC which focused mainly on tangible benefits and interactions with WIC staff. The tangible things interviewees were most positive about were

- the *food and formula* they received which was otherwise not affordable. Although a few stated that they received too much food of one type or that they had to buy too much at one time, most were very grateful for the food, especially the formula. One recipient stated that the WIC program made it possible to meet pediatrician's recommendations for length of time to feed infants formula.
- the *nutrition lessons, recipes and coupons* provided by staff which were viewed as helpful. However, a few recipients did not like the recipes, thought the nutrition

information was impractical or ineffectively taught, and resented sitting through educational sessions on material they already knew.

- the *medical monitoring* using blood testing and body weights which insured their children were well and growing normally. However, a few reported conflicts between information given by the WIC staff and the advice from personal physicians as well as staff inflexibility in managing monthly medical monitoring.

Almost 40% of interviewees reported positive experiences with WIC staff and protocols. Some indicated their general experience had been positive and staff had been caring and supportive. Others listed more specific, positive things, including

- the ease of enrollment, especially noted in Tioga county, and
- the helpful, accommodating, reassuring, and supportive office staff who were flexible about nutrition advice and scheduling of office appointments.

On the other hand, 16% of interviewees reported negative experiences with WIC staff and protocol, which included

- very long waiting times prior to an appointment,
- inconvenient office hours for mothers who worked or went to school,
- rude, insensitive staff,
- some inflexibility in the routine testing of children and unwillingness to consider the family pediatrician's point of view, and
- difficulty getting to the WIC office because of location or transportation.

Nearly equal numbers of interviewees reported experiencing or not experiencing stigma. Fourteen percent indicated they experienced little stigma compared to Food Stamps because WIC was commonly used, recipients could hold a job, and it benefited children. On the other hand, 11% reported either feeling ashamed to use WIC or bad experiences using vouchers in grocery stores.

Head Start opinions and experiences.

Although fewer interviewees made comments about Head Start, the majority of opinions expressed were positive and focused on

- the value of the educational experience it provided to preschool children,
- the work done with the whole family as well as the child, and
- the hot meal provided the participating child.

Interviewees reported relatives and friends had good opinions of the program and that their communities were supportive of the program. Support was especially strong in Huntingdon County were many parents could not afford the private preschools available.

Experiences were more often positive than negative. Eighteen percent of interviewees reported they

- valued the skills their children learned in the program,
- appreciated the evaluations performed that detect learning disabilities, and
- were grateful for the home visitor who worked with the whole family and, in some cases, provided support and needed contacts.

Only 7% of interviewees reported less positive experiences. The majority were concerns about the poor quality of Head Start instruction and educational experiences.

EFNEP opinions and experiences

The vast majority of our interviewees had not heard of this program and only 2 of 105 reported any experience with it. Although these two remembered what they had learned from their brief experience, to most of this sample, EFNEP was invisible.

Usefulness of Educational Program Topics

The women were read a list of 17 educational program topics and asked to rate each by degree of usefulness to them at the present time. Their responses are presented as a mean rating, and the frequencies of responses for each rating category are shown in Table 17. The fifth column of frequencies presents the sum of very useful and useful ratings. The most useful program topics (those rated very useful or useful by at least 70% of the sample or a mean rating of ≥ 3.0) in descending order were

- Taking charge of your income to save for the future (#3)
- How to manage conflict and argument (#5)
- How to talk to your children about important things (#4)
- How to find programs your community offers to help divorced and single parents (#12)
- How to help children adjust to practical and emotional effects of divorce (#13)

(#s are the order listed in the interview guide.)

The programs considered least useful (40% or more of this sample rated not useful) in descending order were

- How to work out grandparents' rights after divorce (#15)
- How to maintain a job; tips on what your employer will expect, and what you can do to meet these expectations (#16)
- How to deal with divorce at work - working with your boss to solve child care, children's illness, and work schedule problems (#17)
- How to choose good child care (#8)

We examined the effect of social support score, educational level, time separated, household structure, and household child type groups on the mean scores of usefulness (See Tables 17a-d in Appendix 2). We found no significant correlations between social support scores and any educational program topics, implying no significant differences among these groups. Surprisingly, there were no significant differences in mean scores between education level groups (Table 17a) and between time separated groups (Table 17b). When useful mean scores were compared by household structure (Table 17c), women living alone rated topic 13 (how to help children adjust to practical and emotional effects of divorce) significantly more useful than women living with others. In addition, the useful ratings for topic 3 (Taking charge of your income to save for the future) and topic 9 (How to cook and shop on a budget) were nearly significantly more useful to those living alone.

Major significant differences surfaced when mean useful scores were compared for the predominate type of children in the household (See Table 17d). Households with school age children felt topic 6 (How to organize your time to balance work with family activities) was significantly more useful than other households. Both households with predominately preschool and predominately school age children felt the following topics were significantly more useful than households with teenagers:

- How to talk to children about important things (#4)
- How to work with children (parenting skills) (#7)
- How to choose good child care (#8)
- How to shop and cook on a budget (#9)
- How to fix fast meals and filling snacks at home (#10)
- How to involve children in food shopping and cooking and solve picky eater problems (#11)
- How to work out grandparent rights after divorce (#15)
- How to maintain a job, etc. (#16)
- How to deal with divorce at work, etc. (#17)

But the last three only received somewhat useful ratings, while the preceding topics received ratings closer to useful. In addition, households with predominately school age children rated topic 12 (How to find programs your community offers for single and divorced parents) significantly more useful than households with predominately teenagers, and households with predominately preschoolers rated topic 13 (How to help children adjust to practical and emotional effects of divorce) significantly more useful than households with predominately teenagers.

Educational Programs to Require at Life Cycle Events

We asked these women if they agreed or disagreed that attending any educational programs be required by law in order to obtain a marriage license, a divorce decree, or legal custody of children. If the woman said 'yes', she was asked to suggest up to three types of educational programs. Table 18 shows the results for the total sample for these questions. Significantly more of this sample felt educational programs should be required at marriage than at divorce. There were no significant differences between the proportion of yes/no responses for the divorce questions and the legal custody question or between the proportion of yes/no responses for the marriage license questions and for the legal custody question.

The five top program topics suggested for each life cycle event are listed on the right. Programs suggested prior to marriage were focused on communication, money management, understanding and sustaining marriage, and parenting skills and issues. The category 'understanding marriage programs' focused on things to understand before getting married because these impact the decision to marry. The category 'sustaining marriage (How to make it work) programs' focused on compromise, co-existence, how to get along, or things that happen after taking marriage vows.

The top five type of programs that these women suggested be required for a divorce decree were counseling, legal implications and outcomes of divorce, and coping with children and an ex-partner after divorce. The top five type of programs suggested to be required for legal custody were parenting, legal issues, dealing with ex-relatives, psychological evaluation, and child development. Psychological evaluation was not a program but a request for testing to ensure emotional stability, good character, and appropriate parenting skills, as well as a background check of activities and income.

We examined the effect of education level, time separated, social support scores, and household structure (mother living alone vs. with other adults) groups on responses. There were no significant correlations of social support scores with these education variables. There were no significant differences in response categories between the time separated groups for any life cycle event (See Table 18a in Appendix 2). In all but one case, the majority did not think any programs should be required. Only for the marriage license did more of those separated longer feel educational programs should be required. Of those saying 'yes', a greater proportion of those separated longer than those separated a shorter time listed understanding marriage, how to make marriage work, and parenting as programs to require for the marriage license. Legal information was mentioned more often by those separated longer as a program to require for the divorce decree.

For the household structure groups, a majority of those living with others were opposed to any educational program requirements (See Table 18b in Appendix 2). A majority of those living alone were in favor of requiring educational programs at marriage and at divorce. The proportion of yes/no responses provided by those living with others was significantly different for each event; the proportion of no to yes for divorce decree was significantly greater than that for marriage education and for legal custody education. Those living with others were especially opposed to an educational requirement to receive a divorce decree. Of those saying 'yes', more who lived alone than those who lived with others suggested the following programs be required: how to communicate, money management, parenting, and understanding and making marriage work, prior to time of marriage; counseling, how to get along at divorce, and legal information, at time of divorce; and parenting, at time of legal custody.

Comparison of educational level groups (See Table 18c in Appendix 2) revealed that in all but one case, the majority of respondents thought educational programs should not be required at these life cycle events. However, significantly more of those with more than a high school education than those with a high school education or less felt educational programs should be required by law to get a marriage license. The proportions of yes/no within the high school or less group and within those with more than a high school education was not significantly different for all three events. We also compared the responses based on three educational groups: GED or no high school diploma; high school diploma; and more than high school. Over two thirds of the GED or no high school diploma group were opposed to educational program requirements at any life cycle event.

Of those saying 'yes', both educational level groups suggested nearly identical types of programs for obtaining a marriage license with similar frequency. The two groups also suggested nearly the same types of programs for obtaining a divorce decree, but a higher proportion of those with a high school education or less suggested legal information and helping children cope with divorce. To obtain legal custody of children, the two groups both most frequently suggested parenting programs.

Important Attributes of an Educational Program

The women were read a list of 12 program attributes and asked to rate these in importance to themselves. For 11 of these 12, they were also asked if this attribute would make it more likely they would attend (attribute #1: total time needed was skipped). The results of these inquires are shown in Table 19. Four attributes received ratings of very important or important (≥ 3.0) and over 85% reported this attribute would make them more likely to attend. These attributes were, in descending order, based on mean rating score,

- total time needed from you - number of sessions and length of sessions (#1)
- learning practical skills or ideas you could use right away (#5)
- meeting times arranged at first session to fit the schedules of those signed up (#8)
- meeting located within 10 miles of your home (#12).

Five other attributes were rated at 2.5 or more, and at least half of respondents reported this would make them more likely to attend. These were, in descending order

- some program information provided on video tape to reduce time away from home (#6)
- free child care provided at the meeting site (#9)
- some activities would be group discussion and sharing experiences (#3)
- program is approved by counselor, doctor, or clergy (#10).

We also examined the ranking of the educational program attributes, using the following definition: the percentage of all those ranking the attribute very important or important, who also answered 'yes' to the attendance question (VIY). The frequency of these restricted responses provided the same attribute ranking, except attribute #8 (meeting times arranged at first session to fit schedules of those signed up) became the most important after total time needed (See the fifth column in Table 19a in Appendix 2). This comparison underscores the importance of arranging meeting times to suit the schedule of those attending.

We examined the impact of income, time separated, household structure, educational level, household child type, and social support groups on these ratings expressed as mean scores (1 = not important to 4 = very important) and as the VIY variable. Social support scores and income groupings did not correlate significantly with any program attribute variables. Examining the time separated groupings revealed only one important significant difference; significantly more of those separated ≥ 2.5 years rated 'some activities would be group discussion and sharing experiences' as more important than those separated < 2.5 years ($p = 0.034$).

When we compared scores for the groups, high school or less vs. more than high school, those with more than a high school education rated 'some sessions held by telephone conference call to reduce time away from home' significantly more important than those with at most a high school education. When we compared scores of those with a GED or less than a high school diploma vs. those with at least a high school diploma, those with at least a high school diploma rated the attribute 'program is approved by counselor, doctor or clergy' as significantly more important than those with only a GED or no high school diploma based on the VIY score ($p = 0.010$). (See Table 19b in Appendix 2.)

When we compared household structure group scores, three attribute VIY scores (practice or apply what you learned at one session before the next; some program information provided on video tape; and free child care provided on site) were significantly more important for those living alone than for those living with others. The attribute, free child care on site, was significantly more important to those living alone than to those living with others based on just the mean score. (See Table 19c in Appendix 2.)

When we examined household child type scores, households with predominately preschool and school age children rated three program attributes (program restricted to same sex single parents; some program information provided on video tape to reduce time away; and free child care provided at the meeting site) as significantly more important than those rated by households with teenagers. Only households with predominately preschool children rated the attribute 'some sessions held by telephone conference call to reduce time away from home' as significantly more important than households with teenagers. These findings were based on both the mean score and VIY score. Households with predominately preschool and school age children also rated the attribute 'program is approved by counselor, doctor or clergy' as significantly more important than those households with predominately teenagers, based on just the mean score. (See Table 19d in Appendix 2.)

Advertising Channels

We asked respondents to rate a list of eight advertising channels where 1 = not likely to and 3 = very likely to attract their attention. We allowed them to list up to three other ways to attract their attention. Table 20 shows the distribution and the mean score for each of these eight channels for the total sample. The two most highly rated channels were 'notice brought home by child from school' and 'ad mailed to your home' with ratings over 2.5.

We examined these ratings, using the same independent variable groupings as used for the educational attributes. Social support scores did not have any correlations with these advertising variables. Comparison of educational level and household structure (mother lives alone vs. with others) groups revealed no significant differences (See Tables 20a and 20c in Appendix 2). When the effects of household child type were examined (See Table 20b in Appendix 2), households with predominately preschoolers were significantly more likely to hear ads on radio talk shows and see notices on community bulletin boards than other households. However, the actual mean ratings were only in the somewhat likely range. Both households with predominately preschool and predominately school age children were significantly more likely to notice ads mailed to their homes. Each type of household differed significantly from the other as to whether a notice brought home from school with a child would attract their attention; households with predominately preschoolers were the most likely to pay attention followed by those with school age, and the least likely to pay attention were those with teenagers. When we examined the results for two income groups (See Table 20d in Appendix 2), the only difference found was that the lower income group was significantly more likely to see a notice on community bulletin boards than those of higher income.

Results from Qualitative Analysis of Section K: Opinions of 'Educational Programs"

(More detailed summaries of findings are in Appendix 3.)

Experience with education programs

Only 30% (32) of our interviewees reported experience with educational programs, but this experience involved a wide variety of programs.

Interviewees' views of needed programs

When asked what types of programs single parents really need, our interviewees suggested a range of programs that could be organized into the following groups.

- Divorce *Specific Programs* - Thirty nine percent (41) suggested programs that helped the single parent explain divorce to children and deal with children's emotional problems. The next most frequently mentioned need was a program to explain one's legal rights and the legal process of divorce. Many had difficulty choosing and interacting with a lawyer and some did not feel they received a fair settlement. The third most requested program was one that provided information on available support (of all kinds) and where to get that support. A small number wanted instruction in how to select good quality child care.
- Personal *Needs Programs* - Half of our interviewees (52) requested training in how to budget and stretch their money to meet immediate needs like monthly bills; many had not handled financial matters during their marriage. The next three most requested programs were support groups (specifically for divorced, single mothers to talk to others like themselves), career development or job search assistance

(especially on the mechanics of finding a job), and counseling (although the reasons why were not often stated). A number of other needs were mentioned by 10 to 17% of our interviewees. These included programs in stress management (being solely responsible for a family was stressful), time management (balancing work and home responsibilities), improving self-esteem (you need to believe you can manage before you can do so), coping with being a single parent (responsibilities and loneliness), skills in home or car care, and how to become involved socially again.

- Family *Related Needs* - Programs about parenting or how to prepare divorced, single parents for handling parenthood alone were requested by nearly a third of our interviewees. A smaller number requested programs about cooking and nutrition (11%) and getting along with others (12%).

We compared program needs voiced by those separated less than 2.5 years and those separated for 2.5 years or more and found few differences. Those separated less than 2.5 years mentioned how to get along with an ex-spouse more than those separated longer, while more of those separated longer mentioned job or career related education programs than those separated less than 2.5 years. We also examined program needs listed by those with a maximum of a high school education and those with schooling beyond high school. The only major difference detected was that those with high school or less were more likely to identify a need for programs that explain divorce or help children cope with divorce than those with more education [(30/68 (45%) vs. 11/68 (16%)].

The variety of needs spoke to the many effects of divorce on a mother's mental and physical coping skills. Although many different programs were requested, in total they addressed the problems of getting through the divorce process, adjusting to being single, raising children, running a household, and supporting a family.

Why education programs are not attended

When asked the reasons that divorced parents do not attend education programs, over half of our interviewees indicated that time constraints imposed by working and managing their schedule and a baby sitter's schedule were major reasons they did not attend educational programs. Some interviewees (11/105 or 10%) also indicated they have so little time with their children now that they would not take more time away to attend a class. A number of physical things were barriers: 41% indicated fees of any sort were just not affordable; a third said that transportation to programs was not available, and a third of the interviewees indicated that the county seat was not a convenient location for any program. Thirty five percent indicated that some divorced, single parents are just not interested in educational programs, either not caring to make changes or, more importantly, not believing they will help. Finally, 22% indicated that shame and embarrassment were reasons people did not attend programs; some single mothers are embarrassed to admit that they need help and feel like a failure because they do need help. Fourteen percent also indicated they would feel uncomfortable sharing personal experiences with a group.

No differences surfaced based on grouping interviewees by time separated.

What makes people uncomfortable at an educational program?

When asked what might make them uncomfortable at an educational program, 75% identified factors related to the group situation and/or personal information that would make them uncomfortable. A fifth of interviewees (22/105 or 21%) indicated they would be uncomfortable discussing personal information at an educational program either with strangers or with acquaintances. Their comments revealed their feelings that some in the community would blame the woman for the failure of the marriage and that divorce itself carries a stigma in small communities. A small number specifically said they would be uncomfortable in a group because talking about their situation might reveal that they did not know how to handle their own situation. An additional 16% expressed discomfort about speaking to a group or participating in role playing activities. Some women described circumstances that would make them more comfortable to disclose personal information. These were: a) a guarantee that all information discussed in the group is confidential; b) having time to become acquainted with members of the group before beginning any personal story telling; c) knowing that others in the group have similar problems, and d) having an open atmosphere in the group.

These interviewees also had concerns about the ages, sex, and socio-economic status of group participants. Interviewees seemed to want groups to include only people very much like themselves. They also wanted an experienced leader, someone who had been through a situation similar to their own. Despite some interviewees' concerns about speaking in a group, a number of them wanted a group atmosphere that allowed for open expression and acceptance of ideas, and wanted the size of the group to be small enough so that everyone had a chance to talk.

No differences surfaced based on grouping interviewees by time separated.

Food Questions

For many of these questions, women were asked what they did now (after the divorce) and what they did then (before the divorce when they were married). First, the 'now' results will be presented followed by the 'then' results.

- ***Food provisioning patterns now vs. then***

The women were asked a series of questions about frequency of food shopping trips, who usually food shopped, and whether they owned a freezer separate from a refrigerator, raised a vegetable garden, canned or froze food in season, or served game killed by household members, relatives, or friends. Table 21 presents the total sample answers to these questions.

These women reported shopping a mean of 2.19 times per month, now. Ninety eight percent of this sample did the food shopping, but about 30% of these mothers shopped alone, while in 54% of these households, children came shopping with an adult. In 15% of households, relatives or significant others were involved in food shopping. Now, half of this sample owned a freezer and 47% froze or canned food for later use. Only 21% raised a garden, but 34% served game provided by others, now.

Then, these women went on significantly more shopping trips (2.84 vs. 2.19), more spouses and fewer relatives were involved in shopping, and significantly more raised a garden and served game killed by household members, relatives, or friends regularly.

We checked the effect of income levels, household child type, sex of child in household, household structure, and social support on these variables. Social support scores made no significant difference nor did having a female child over age 7 or over age 13 in the household, except in households with a teenage girl, where children (of any age) were less likely to be involved in food shopping.

When households where the mother lived alone now were compared to those living with other adults now (See Table 21a in Appendix 2), households with only a single mother involved significantly more children in food shopping and were less likely to own a freezer or raise a garden now. When responses for now vs. then were compared within each group, both those living alone and those living with others shopped significantly more often in the past than now. Those living alone now were significantly less likely to own a separate freezer now, raise a garden now, and serve game now than in the past. Those living with others now were significantly less likely to serve game now than in the past.

Surprisingly, income level had no significant effect on any of the now variables (See Table 21b in Appendix 2). Low income households involved more children in shopping trips now than higher income households, but the difference was not significant. When responses for now vs. then were compared by income level, respondents shopped more often in the past than now, regardless of income. Those of higher income were significantly less likely to raise a garden or serve game now than in the past. Those with lower income were significantly less likely to serve game now than in the past.

When we examined the effect of household child type on the pattern of responses, the only difference among these groups now was that significantly more households with predominately teenagers were raising vegetable gardens (See Table 21c in Appendix 2). Looking at now vs. then within groups, all groups shopped significantly more often in the past than now. Those households with predominately teenagers were significantly less likely to have a freezer or raise a garden now than in the past. Those with predominately school age children were significantly less likely to raise a garden and serve game now than in the past. Households with predominately preschoolers were significantly less likely to serve game now than in the past.

- ***Frequency of meals from specific sources now***

Respondents were asked to indicate the average number of meals they ate in a week and then in a month, from specific sources (See Table 22). Respondents reported eating a mean of 20 evening meals prepared at home with children per month or 5 evening meals per week. This sample ate a mean of only 3.5 meals a month with their children in restaurants and about the same number of meals made from take-out food. They reported their children ate a mean of 7 meals a month with relatives and 2.5 meals a month with family friends when the respondent was not present.

We examined the effect of household structure, income level, household child type, sex/age of child, and social support on these values. There were no correlations of social support scales with any of these variables, and the presence of a female child over age 7 or over age 13 made no difference. Household structure affected only one variable. Households where the mother lived alone reported eating significantly fewer evening meals made at home with their children than households where other adults were present. Income level made no difference in these values (See Table 22a in Appendix 2). Households with predominately preschool children and predominately school age children reported significantly more times per month when children ate with relatives (without the parent present); nothing else was significantly different (See Table 22b in Appendix 2).

• ***Money saving habits (coupons, generic brands, specials) now vs. then***

The women were asked how often they use coupons or purchase generic brands when shopping and check circulars or ads before they food shop now vs. then. Table 23 shows the results for the total sample both as a mean value and as frequency of response category. Based on the scale where 1 = every time and 4 = almost never, a lower mean response indicated more use of the money saving activity. Now, respondents reported using coupons, purchasing generics, and using circulars most of the time. In the past, before the divorce, respondents were significantly less likely to purchase generic brands or use circulars. In the past, this was as likely done some of the time as most of the time.

We examined the effect of household structure, income levels, household child type, and social support score groups. There were no significant differences between the household structure groups, mothers living alone vs. living with others, or the two income groups for now to now comparisons and for then to then comparisons (See Table 23a in Appendix 2). However, there were significant differences for now to then comparisons. Use of coupons did not change significantly then to now. But both purchase of generics and use of circulars increased significantly in these groups after the divorce (now).

The same pattern was observed comparing households with predominate types of children (See Table 23b in Appendix 2). Comparisons of now to now and then to then were not significantly different, but now to then comparisons indicated significantly more purchase of generics and use of circulars now, after the divorce. Coupon use did not change significantly then to now.

Differential tangible support levels and informational support levels had no effect on coupon use or on purchase of generics in now to now or then to then comparisons (See Table 23c in Appendix 2). However, now to then comparisons indicated consistently more generic and circular use now than in the past, while coupon use did not change significantly. In addition, tangible support levels (as reported for now) had a significant effect on use of ads or circulars then while information support had no effect. Significantly more of those with less tangible support now were using circulars in the past, compared to those with more tangible support now. This implies that those with less tangible support now were also less well off in the past.

- ***Children's involvement in food chores now***

The women were asked whether any of their children were involved in a variety of food chores now. If children were involved, the woman was asked to identify the sex of these children. Table 24 shows the pattern that emerged for the total sample. Only 6% of these women reported any child doing some of the family food shopping on their own; of these children, two thirds were female. Forty six percent of the women reported children were regularly involved with food shopping; more than half were male. Over two thirds reported that children in the household were regularly fixing meals for themselves; similar proportions of males and females were doing this (based on adding numbers of single sex to the numbers of both). Only 14% of these women reported any child was regularly expected to help fix meals for others in the household; the majority doing this were female. Nearly 70% of these women reported that children were regularly expected to clean up after meals; about equal proportions of males and females were doing this.

We examined the effect of household structure, income level, household child type, sex/age of child, and social support scores. There were no significant correlations of social support scores with any of these variables, and there was no significant effect of household structure on children's involvement (See Table 24a in Appendix 2). However, a significantly greater proportion of higher income households reported that children were responsible for fixing meals for themselves and for others (See Table 24a in Appendix 2).

When the effect of household child type was examined, we found a significantly higher proportion of households with teenagers reported children doing food shopping on their own than both other types of households (See Table 24b in Appendix 2). A significantly higher proportion of households with preschoolers reported children helping with food shopping than both other types of households. A greater proportion of households with predominately teenagers or school age children reported these children were fixing meals for themselves than households with predominately preschool children, and this difference was nearly significant (f = 1.83, p = 0.059). The proportions of males and females involved differed in each type of household: more females in predominately preschool households; nearly equal males and females in predominately school age households; and more males in predominately teenage households. A significantly greater proportion of households with predominately preschool children reported a child helping to fix meals for others than households with predominately school age children. All the children helping in these preschool households were female and may represent an older sister helping with younger preschool children. The proportion of households reporting children involved in clean up was nearly the same in all categories. Similar proportions of both sexes were involved in clean up for predominately preschool and school age households; in households with predominately teenagers, more males were doing this than females.

Table 25 presents the results of comparing households defined by sex/age of children. Significantly more households with female children age 7 or more reported a child (of any age) was regularly fixing meals for themselves while significantly fewer households with female children age 7 or more reported children (of any age) regularly involved in food shopping compared to the other households. Significantly fewer households with a female child age 13 or more reported children (of any age) involved in food shopping compared to the other households, possibly because teenagers are less involved in food shopping than younger children (See Table 24b in Appendix 2).

- ***Feelings about food security now and then***

The women were asked a set of four questions to estimate feelings of food security now and then (before the divorce). Table 26 presents the total sample's mean score and the distribution of answers for each question. In general, lower scores mean greater confidence in their own food security or ability to feed their family. The mean scores indicate that this sample felt it has just enough money to spend on food, has enough food but not always what they want to eat, may run low on food because of lack of money 1 day a month, and that they were confident about feeding their family every day of the month now. About 20% were somewhat lacking in confidence they can feed their family now. Before the divorce (then), this sample felt they had somewhat more than enough money for food, that they were more likely to have enough of the kinds of food they wanted to eat, and that they were significantly more confident they could feed their family.

We examined the effect of household structure, income level, household child type, sex/age of child, and social support score groups on these results. First, we examined the effects of household structure and income on these questions. Those living alone now were significantly less comfortable with the amount of money they had to spend on food than those living with others. Those living alone felt significantly better about the amount of money available for food, the amount of food in the house, and had significantly more confidence in their ability to feed their family then (before the divorce) than now, compared to those living with others. Those with lower income had less money to spend on food now and were less confident they could feed their family than those with higher incomes, although this difference was not significant. Those with lower income now felt significantly better about the amount of food in the house and had significantly more confidence in their ability to feed their family before the divorce than now compared to those with higher income. However, both income groups felt they had significantly more money to spend on food before the divorce than now. (See Table 26a in Appendix 2.)

Next we examined the effects of household child type on the results. There were no significant differences between groups for these variables in regard to having money to spend on food now. All three types of households felt they had significantly more money to spend on food before the divorce than now. Only those households with teenagers felt they had significantly more of the foods they wanted to eat and were significantly more confident they could feed their families before the divorce than now. (See Table 26b in Appendix 2.)

Tangible support groups had no significant effect on the results for now to now comparisons. However, those with lower tangible support scores reported having somewhat less than enough money for food compared to just enough money for food for those with higher tangible support scores now. In addition, those with lower tangible support scores were less confident of their ability to provide food for their family than those with higher tangible support scores now. Both of these were nearly significant differences (f = 3.22, p = 0.076 and f = 3.43, p = 0.067, respectively). Those with lower tangible support scores felt significantly better about the food available in the house and significantly more confident they could feed their family before the divorce than now, while no such differences were evident in those with higher tangible support scores. However, both tangible support groups felt they had somewhat more than just enough money for food before divorce and significantly less now. (See Table 26c in Appendix 2.)

Some of this pattern was repeated for the information support groups. Those with lower information support scores felt they had significantly less money to spend on food now than those with higher information scores now. In addition, both information support groups felt they had somewhat more than just enough money for food before divorce and significantly less now. Those with lower information support scores felt significantly better about the food available in the house and were significantly more confident about feeding their family before the divorce than now. This pattern was not seen in those with higher information support scores. (See Table 26c in Appendix 2.)

When households were grouped into those with female children age 7 or older vs. all others, and those with female children age 13 or older vs. all others, this had no significant effect on now to now comparisons. This did significantly affect some now to then comparisons. When households with females age 7 or older are segregated, the other group represents households with many males. Both types of households felt they have significantly less money for food now than in the past. But the 'other' households felt they had significantly less of the foods they want to eat and were significantly less confident they could provide food for their family now than in the past, compared to those with more females age 7 or older. A somewhat similar pattern was seen in the comparison of households with female teenagers vs. others. There were no significant effects on now to now comparisons, but the 'other' households felt significantly more secure about food (3 of 4 questions) before the divorce than now. (See Table 26d in Appendix 2.)

Results from Qualitative Analysis of Section N: Elements of Food Security and Food Exchange

We asked our interviewees to recall their personal assessment of their confidence about feeding their family now made in the preceding quantitative questions and to share the reasons for their confidence or no confidence.

Reasons for being confident now

Half of the interviewees (58/105 or 54%) indicated they were confident of being able to feed their family now. Their reasons fell into three categories: their economic state (27/58 or 46%); their control of finances (33/105 or 57%), and assistance from relatives (12/58 or 21%).

The major economic reason was that their present job provided a steady income, although some indicated they could not make it on wages alone and needed government assistance. Some of these women also mentioned that they have fewer people to feed (no husband) or young children who did not eat much. Some said they made food a priority, cutting back on other things.

Control of finances meant that these women controlled the decisions made about feeding the family (receiving assistance played no part in these decisions). A number of women felt more confident in being able to plan and prepare meals for their families now. Their ex-husband had damaged this confidence during the marriage, and after divorce, they no longer had to deal with a husband ridiculing their cooking or telling them what to cook. About half of these confident women had strategies for saving and spending money on a budget. Some of these strategies included buying things on sale, avoiding already prepared foods, and spending less in other areas to allow more money for food. Some also raised a garden, preserved food, and used other foods to stretch meat. Some indicated they would take whatever steps necessary to insure food was on the table, demonstrating that they believed they were in control of the situation.

For some, assistance from relatives was either available now or could be gotten if necessary. Parents, grandparents, siblings, and significant others were listed as part of the support network.

Reasons for not being confident now

Forty three percent of interviewees (45/105) indicated they were not confident about feeding their family now. Two reasons surfaced: loss of husband's income and reliance on government assistance. Divorce resulted in many moving from a dual income to the woman's income, which was less than that of their ex-husband, while many of the household bills were for the same amount as during marriage. Some women were now unemployed. Those with too little income felt other bills competed with food, leading to spending less on food. Reliance on government assistance was difficult when ex-husbands were unreliable and inconsistent in support payments; good support payments meant lower benefits, but the need for benefits would reappear when support payments disappeared. This put some women who were completely dependent on Welfare on very shaky financial ground.

What Was Different in the Past

When asked what was different before the divorce, only five interviewees stated there was no difference in the past and now in regard to confidence in feeding their family; these five had a constant struggle to provide for them. Eighty five (85%) interviewees provided comparisons between past and present. The majority (51/85 or 60%) stated their financial situation was better in the past because then there were two incomes. Now they had only one income to cover all the family expenses. A few also mentioned the loss of a partner who gardened, hunted, or helped in preparing meals. Twenty one percent (18/85) stated they were in worse financial straits when they were married because their husband did not work or have steady employment; their husband tightly controlled the money and decisions about money, sometimes to the point of being abusive; or their husband's income was adequate, but he was wasteful or inefficient in managing it. These women's situation was better now because they could make better decisions about the money they had.

About thirty four percent (29/85) of these interviewees reported changes in meal time traditions. For most, when they were married, the family ate a traditional, big evening meal together. Such meals were not common now because of time and activity constraints but also because the husband is missing and the family is smaller.

Nineteen percent (16/85) indicated divorce led to loss of time to garden, can and freeze food for later use, and, for some, a loss of game provided by the ex-husband. Frozen or canned goods put away contributed to 'food security.' However, 15% (13/85) indicated the costs of feeding the family was more manageable now, either because of smaller family size or elimination of a husband with expensive tastes.

How has divorce affected their ability to feed their family now?

While seven interviewees indicated that divorce had no impact on their ability to feed their family, 65 interviewees (65/105 or 62%) indicated some impact of divorce on this.

Twenty four (24/65 or 37%) indicated that loss of income, undependable child support, and responsibility for all the bills cut the amount of money for food. In contrast, five interviewees (8%) indicated their ability to provide for their family had improved with divorce; three because of gaining control of finances and two because of fewer people to feed and receiving Food Stamps.

Sixteen (25%) interviewees indicated their tight financial situation by discussing all the ways they now used to stretch food dollars, including using coupons, comparative shopping, buying generics, and buying less meat and more canned foods. Some talked of making the food purchased last longer or skipping meals in order to feed their children.

Seventeen (26%) interviewees felt the divorce had also changed meal time rules, many of which had been imposed by husbands. Now, meals could be smaller, meatless, less structured, and unscheduled with no required food combinations, and there was less pressure involved in preparing meals.

Expenses that compete with food costs

When asked what expenses competed with food costs, 15 interviewees (15/105 or 14%) stated no bills or expenses compete with food costs. For a few of these interviewees (5), having Food Stamps made the difference. Eighty two interviewees (82/105 or 78%) named several expenses they felt competed with money available for food. In descending order, with the most cited first, these were: a) electric, heat, car insurance; b) phone, mortgage; c) rent, credit card, or other debt, and d) all expenses, including child entertainment or activities, clothing, medical, taxes, and childcare.

When asked how they decided what bills to pay as related to food purchase, the main rules that emerged were to:

- ask for help (from their family) because food is a priority (6)*.
- pay for food and other expenses for children before other bills (children come first rule) (8).
- pay for food first (not necessarily just for children) before other bills are paid (food first rule) (21).
- cut expenses that compete with food costs in order to pay other bills (24).
- pay particular bills to maintain credit rating, even if it means reducing what is spent on food (usually stated with the idea that the family will not starve) (26).
- pay the most important or first due bill (at times food would be most important) (26).

*(number of interviewees mentioning this)

Creative things done to insure the family has enough to eat all month

When asked what creative things they do to insure food for their family, all but 2 of 103 (98%) interviewees provided responses. Many denied that these things were creative; rather they were common sense habits. The things listed were:

- purchasing and preparing food that their children prefer (15)*.
- cutting the amount of meat the family eats (17).
- the mother eating less or eating after the children have enough (4).
- working in exchange for food (3).
- buying in large quantities (containers or value packs of meat) (35).
- purchasing less food (making fewer trips to the store and being more selective) (31).
- buying store brands or generics (52).
- shopping sales and using coupons (60).
- simplifying meals but using fewer prepared or quick foods (30).
- using leftovers and preparing large quantities to be used at multiple meals (72).
- gardening and/or caning and freezing (14).
- hunting themselves or receiving game from others (7).

*(number of interviewees mentioning this)

What information would help make sure their family has enough to eat?

This was a challenging question for our interviewees. Fewer supplied responses and these fell into three groups:

- such information was not needed (23 interviewees). These women felt they knew what to do, were doing a good job, and had things under control.
- how to budget and manage money and especially how to shop comparatively (29 interviewees).
- miscellaneous information such as nutrition information (7 interviewees), recipes (6 interviewees), and stretching food (4 interviewees).

Exchanging food with relatives

Interviewees were asked what role others played in feeding their families and were queried first about their relatives. The following patterns emerged from their comments:

- They shared garden produce and canned produce (14)*.
- They worked for relatives in exchange for food or gave food to relatives in exchange for childcare (5).
- They shared food equally or combined what food they had for a meal together on a regular basis (13).
- They shared meals, snacks, or ingredients with relatives on an irregular basis (27).
- They received ongoing support from relatives in feeding their families (46).

*(number of interviewees mentioning this)

Often interviewees ate with their parents on a regular basis, or the grandparents regularly fed the grandchildren. Some relatives would just buy groceries for or share groceries with the interviewee on a regular basis.

Sometimes this exchange of food was described clearly as one-way, with the interviewee as the recipient (10 interviewees); for others, especially with parents, this was described as a two-way exchange, with both parties giving something (16 interviewees).

Some interviewees volunteered reasons for the establishment of these exchanges. Three main reasons emerged: a) the mother's work schedule prompted the grandparents to feed the children; b) others had too much from a garden or hunting and shared it, and c) miscellaneous reasons, including illness, or in payment for work or support.

Exchanging food with friends and neighbors

Interviewees were also asked to describe any informal food exchange with neighbors or friends. These responses fell into three patterns:

- bartering in which food was given in exchange for work or service (9 interviewees).
- fifty-fifty sharing in which both parties participated in exchanging food for their mutual benefit and which resulted in a sense of trust and dependability (29 interviewees).
- good will exchanges in which food was accepted without expectation of a returned favor (45 interviewees).

Other Ways of Looking at the Data

We also organized the food security and exchange qualitative data to compare certain groups and to look for links between coding groups. Only one comparison produced significantly different patterns of responses. Interviewees were divided into those confident now and not confident now. Accordingly, their responses were compared in the following categories:

- *Rules for competing costs* - More confidents (16)* than not confidents (4) could make food a first priority before paying other bills. Fewer confidents (8) than not confidents (18) reported taking money from food to pay other bills.
- *Creative things to feed their family* - More confidents (20) reported purchasing food in large quantities than not confidents (12). Fewer confidents (6) than not confidents (22) reported making simpler meals and stretching food. More confidents (13) than not confidents (7) reported raising gardens, canning or freezing, and eating game. More confidents (39) than not confidents (29) reported

using coupons, doing comparison shopping, and stocking up when something was on sale. Also more confidents (30) than not confidents (23) reported preparing meals ahead and using leftovers.

- *Exchanging food with relatives* - More confidents (11) than not confidents (2) reported sharing food equally or combining food with others. More confidents (22) reported informal sharing of food with relatives than not confidents (14).
- *Exchanges with friends and neighbors* - Nearly equal numbers of confident now (14) and not confident now (13) reported fifty-fifty exchanges. More confidents (27) participated in good will exchanges than not confidents (18).

* number of interviewees

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Table 1: Independent variables

Major category	Independent Variable	Description
Divorce Status	Total time separated	If divorcing = time separated; if divorced = time divorced + time permanently separated prior to divorce. short = <2.5 yr. long = ≥ 2.5 yr.
Human Capitol	Mother's education	• High school or less • More than high school (vocational degree or college)
	Mother's work status	• unemployed • part time work • full time work/self-employed
	Yearly Family Income	0 - $5000 5001 - 10,000 10,001 - 14,000 14,001 - 20,000 20K or less 20,001 - 25,000 20,001 or + 25,001 - 30,000 30,001 - 39,000 39,001 +
Household Composition	Number of adults in household	• Mother only • Mother and other adults
	Number of children	• one child • two or more children
	Households with predominant types of children	• Predominately preschool (% pre ≥ % school age and % pre ≥ % teen = predom preschool; If =, lower wins; if ≠, higher wins) Preschool = 0-6 yr. of age • Predominately school age (% school >% pre and % school > % teen = predominately school; If =, lower wins; if ≠, higher wins) School age = 7-12 yr. of age • Predominately teenagers (% teen > % pre and % teen > % school = predominately teens; If =, lower wins; if ≠, higher wins) Teenage = age 13 or older
	Households with preschool children (0 - 6 yr.) vs. others	• predominately preschool households • all other households

Major category, cont'd.	Independent Variable	Description
	Households with female children 7 yr. of age or older	• households with female school age or teenage child • all other households
	Households with female children 13 yr. of age or older	• households with female teenage children • all other households
Experience with Community Assistance	Experience with Welfare Programs	• Use now = use of General Assistance, SSI, rent assistance, or Food Stamps now. • Use in past = after removing use now, those used any of above programs in past. • No experience = those left after removing use now and use in past.
	Experience with Child Nutrition/Feeding programs	• Use now = use of WIC, EFNEP, or Head Start now • Use in past and • No experience determined as above.
	Experience with Emergency Assistance Programs (categorical)	• Use now = use of food bank, emergency homeless shelter, or domestic violence shelter now. • Use in past and • No experience determined as above.
	Experience with Educational Programs (categorical)	• Use now .= use of parenting education, divorce education, money management or food shopping, cooking program now. • Use in past and • No experience determined as above.
Social Support	Tangible Support Score 4 = extremely helpful to 1 = slightly helpful Alpha = 0.62; Split half = 0.59	Highest possible score = 44 • Low sum score - 14 or less • High sum score - 15 or more
	Informational Support Scale 4 = extremely helpful to 1 = slightly helpful Alpha = 0.67; Split half = 0.60	Highest possible score = 44 • Low sum score - 12 or less • High sum score - 13 or more

Table 2 : Attitude scale reliability (internal consistency)

Program group	Total scale (14 questions)	Access subscale (4 questions)	Need subscale (3 questions)	Stigma subscale (3 questions)
Welfare	0.7627	0.5990	0.7170	0.7814
Child nutrition programs	0.8304	0.7151	0.6660	0.8944
Emergency assistance programs	0.8265	0.7297	0.7333	0.8607
Educational programs	(7 questions) 0.6771	0.7212	0.8520	NA

Table 3 : Response rate to flyer and interview completion by county

County	# Mailed	Not deliverable	Received but not qualified	Interviews completed	# completed from Divorce Ed or C&Y	Response rate for flyers*	Completion rate for flyers**
Bedford	124	24	2	16	2 (C&Y)	16/100 or 14%	14/98 or 14.3%
Huntingdon	140	17	6	21	6 (3 DE, 3 C&Y)	21/123 or 17.0%	15/117 or 12.8%
Centre	358	49	25	21	3 (DE)	43/309 or 13.9%	18/284 or 6.3%
Columbia	306	69	4	13		17/237 or 7.2%	13/233 or 5.6%
Tioga	174	26	5	20	3 (C&Y)	22/148 or 15.9%	17/143 or 11.9%
Bradford	365	25	15	16	1 (DE)	30/340 or 8.8%	15/325 or 4.6%
Totals	1467	210	57	107	15	149/1257 or 11.9%	92/1200 or 7.7%

* Numerator is interviews completed - # from DE or C&Y + received but not qualified; denominator is mailed - not deliverable

** Numerator is interviews completed - # from DE or C&Y; denominator is mailed - (not deliverable + received but not qualified)

Table 4: Demographic characteristics of interviewees

Variable	Initial Categories	Sample No. N = 107	Independent Variable Groupings or comments
Race	Caucasian	106 (99.1%)	
	American Indian	1(0.9%)	
Age	Mean ± SD	35.813±7.336	Range 22 - 53 yr.
Education	No GED + GED	9 (8.4%)	
	High school (HS)	58 (54.2%)	HS or less - 67 (62.6%)
	Vocational or Associate degree	31 (29.0%)	More than HS - 40 (37.4%)
	Bachelor's or Master's	9 (8.4%)	
Work status	In school/training	12 (11.2%)	
	Looking work, unemp.	12 (11.2%)	unemp. - 24 (22.4%)
	Work part-time	10 (9.3%)	part-time - 10 (9.3%)
	Work full time	67 (62.6%)	full time - 73 (68.2%)
	Self employed	6 (5.5%)	
Type of jobs		N =106	
	Blue collar - laborer, farmer, factory worker	22 (20.8%)	
	Service - cook, cleaning, cashier, customer service	33 (31.1%)	
	Skilled - clerk, accountant, teacher, nurse, grad student assistant	48 (45.3%)	
	Blank, never worked	3 (2.8%)	
Income	0 - $5000	2 (1.9%)	
	5001 -10,000	14 (13.1%)	
	10,001 - 14,000	19 (17.8%)	
	14,001 - 20,000	26 (24.3%)	20K and less - 61 (57.1%)
	20,001 - 25,000	16 (15.0%)	20K plus - 46 (43.1%)
	25,001 - 30,000	14 (13.1%)	
	30,001 - 39,000	11 (10.3%)	
	39,001 +	5 (4.7%)	
Sources of income	receiving AFDC	5 (4.7%)	total % > than 100
	receiving SSI	13 (12.1%)	
	receiving Food Stamps	21 (19.6%)	
	receiving WIC	12 (11.2%)	
	receiving child support	81 (75.7%)	
	receiving income from parents	8 (7.5%)	
No. motor vehicles in household	0	1 (0.9%)	
	1	72 (67.3%)	
	2	23 (21.5%)	2+ - 34(31.8%)
	3-5	11 (10.3%)	

Table 4 cont'd. : Demographic characteristics of interviewees

Variable	Initial Categories	Sample No. N = 107	Independent Variable Groupings or comments
Status of residence	rent	44 (41.1%)	rent - 44 (41.1%)
	own alone, make pay	36 (33.6%)	
	own joint, make pay	8 (7.5%)	own + payment - 44 (41.1%)
	own alone or joint, paid for	5 (4.6%)	
	live with someone else	9 (8.4%)	no payment -14 (13.0%)
	other	5 (4.7%)	
Time lived in county	Mean years ± SD	22.77±12.36	range 0.92 - 49 yr.
Marital Status	married, separated but divorcing	5 (4.7%)	
	divorced, still single	82 (76.6%)	
	divorced, single but living with significant other (SO)	20 (18.7%)	
Were you permanently separated prior to this divorce?	No	3 (2.8%)	
	Yes	99 (92.5%)	
	not applicable	5 (4.7%)	
Total time separated	Mean ± SD in years (time divorced or time divorced plus permanent separation)	N = 107 3.02 ± 2.20	range 0.42 -14 yr. median 2.5 yr.
Distribution of time separated	short = <2.5 yr.	50 (46.7%)	
	long = ≥ 2.5 yr.	57 (53.3%)	
Time married to ex-spouse	Mean ± SD in years	N = 107 10.60 ± 6.94	range 0.42 - 30 yr.
Number of friends	a)Tangible assist.	4.29±3.25	Median - 3.0 range (majority) 0-10
	b) Information assist.	4.32±3.25	
Support score	Tangible assistance	15.50±6.75	Median 15 range 4 - 32
Support score	Informational assistance	13.59±6.73	Median 13 range 0 - 31
Tangible support scores distribution	low sum = 14 or less	52 (48.6%)	
	high sum = 15 or more	55 (51.4%)	
Informational support scores distribution	low sum = 12 or less	49 (45.8%)	
	high sum = 13 or more	58 (54.2%)	

Table 5 : Household composition - children

Variable	Initial Categories	Sample No. N = 107	Independent Variable Groupings or comments
Number of children per household	1	46 (43.0%)	
	2	44 (41.1%)	2+ - 61 (56.9%)
	3	13 (12.1%)	3+ - 17 (15.8%)
	4+ (4 or 8)	4 (3.7%)	
Number of female children per household	0	43 (40.2%)	
	1	46 (43.0%)	
	2	16 (15.0%)	
	4+ (4 or 6)	2 (1.8%)	
Number of male children per household	0	25 (23.4%)	
	1	63 (58.9%)	
	2	15 (14.0%)	
	3	4 (3.7%)	
No with pre-school children: ages 0 - 6 yr.	0	66 (61.7%)	
	1	27 (25.2%)	
	2	14 (13.1%)	total 41 households
No with school age children: ages 7 - 12 yr.	0	53 (49.5%)	
	1	35 (32.7%)	
	2	14 (13.1%)	
	3+ (3 or 4)	5 (4.6%)	total 54 households
Number with teenagers in household: ages 13 -18 yr.	0	60 (56%)	(there were two 18 yr. olds)
	1	39 (36.4%)	
	2+ (2, 3, or 4)	8 (7.5%)	total 47 households
Households with			
predom. preschool		38 (35.5%)	
predom. school age		41 (38.3%)	
predom. teenagers		28 (26.2%)	
Households with -			
• female school age or teenage members	female age 7+	40 (37.4%)	
	all others	67 (62.6%)	
• female teenage members	female age 13+	16 (15.0%)	
	all others	91 (85.0%)	

Table 6 : Household composition - other adults

Variable	Initial Categories	Sample No. N = 107	Independent Variable Groupings or comments
Number of adults per household	1	73 (68.2%)	
	2	24 (22.4%)	
	3	7 (6.5%)	3+ - 10 (9.3%)
	4	2 (1.9%)	
	5	1(0.9%)	total with another adult - 34 (31.7%)
Relationship of other adults in household		N = 34	
	sign other (SO)	20 (41.7%)	
	parent (p)	10 (20.8%)	p + gp - 12 (25.0%)
	grandparent (gp)	2 (4.2%)	
	sibling	1 (2.1%)	other - 16 (33.4%)
	aunt/uncle	1 (2.1%)	
	own child	7 (14.6%)	
	platonic friend	2 (4.2%)	
	other	5 (10.4%)	
Significant other job status (87 missing)		N = 20	
	full time	8 (40.0%)	full + self - 11(55.0%)
	part time	1 (5.0%)	
	self employed	3 (15.0%)	
	unemployed	7 (35.0%)	
	other	1 (5.0%)	
Significant other ed. status (87 missing)		N = 20	
	No GED (≤ 8th & HS but no Dip.)	6 (30.0%)	
	GED or HS	9 (45.0%)	
	Some college	1 (5.0%)	
	Bachelors	3 (15.0%)	
	don't know	1 (5.0%)	
Composition SO households			
	SO only	18 (90%)	
	SO + 1 adult	1 (5.0%)	adult = other
	SO + 3 adults	1 (5%)	adult = one platonic friend, two 'others'

Table 7 : Pattern of use of community assistance programs for the total sample, N = 107

Program	Use now	Used in past	Never used; Familiar	Familiar & Very likely + Somewhat likely to use
Welfare or General Assistance including AFDC	36 (33.6%)	34 (31.8%)	37 (34.6%) 32 (29.9%)	23 (71.9%)
Supplemental Security Income	12(11.2%)	1 (0.9%)	94 (87.9%) 46 (43.0%)	43 (93.5%)
County Rent Assistance	9 (8.4%)	13 (12.1%)	85 (79.4%) 39 (36.4%)	29 (74.3%)
Food Stamps	23 (21.5%)	35 (32.7%)	49 (45.8%) 43 (40.2%)	37 (86.0%)
Women's, Infants' and Children's Supplemental Food Program	17 (5.9%)	51 (47.7%)	39 (36.5%) 34 (31.8%)	29 (85.5%)
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)	2 (1.9%)	9 (8.4%)	96 (89.7%) 14 (13.1%)	8 (57.2%)
Head Start Program	4 (3.7%)	19 (17.8%)	84 (78.5%) 51 (47.7%)	38 (74.5%)
Local Food Bank	7 (6.5%)	22 (20.6%)	78 (72.9%) 43 (40.2%)	37 (86.1%)
Emergency Food and Shelter Programs for homeless	2 (1.9%)	5 (4.7%)	100 (93.5%) 52 (48.6%)	40 (76.9%)
Domestic Violence Shelters or Programs	4 (3.7%)	28 (26.2%)	75 (70.1%) 58 (54.2%)	51 (87.9%)
County Domestic Relations Office	71 (66.4%)	17 (15.9%)	19 (17.7%) 12 (11.2%)	12 (100.0%)
County Children and Youth Services	8 (7.5%)	16 (15.0%)	83 (77.6%) 46 (43.0%)	35 (76.1%)

Table 7, cont'd : Pattern of use of community assistance programs

Program	Use now	Used in past	Never used; Familiar	Familiar & Very likely + Somewhat likely to use
Individual and Family Counseling Services	19 (17.8%)	45 (42.1%)	43 (40.2%) 17 (15.9%)	14 (82.4%)
Support Group	6 (5.6%)	13 (12.1%)	88 (82.3%) 34 (31.8%)	26 (76.5%)
Parenting Education Programs	8 (7.5%)	11 (10.3%)	88 (82.2%) 28 (26.2%)	22 (78.5%)
Divorce Education Programs	4 (3.7%)	25 (23.4%)	78 (72.9%) 12 (11.2%)	9 (75.0%)
Money Management Programs	3 (2.8%)	6 (5.6%)	98 (91.6%) 14 (13.1%)	11 (78.6%)
Food Shopping, Storage and Cooking programs	1 (0.9%)	9 (8.4%)	97 (90.7%) 24 (22.4%)	915(62.5%)
Job Training Programs	7 (6.5%)	35 (32.7%)	65 (60.8%) 34 (31.8%)	32 (94.1%)
Career Development Programs	5 (4.7%)	22 (20.6%)	80 (74.8%) 28 (26.2%)	22 (78.5%)

Table 8 : Pattern of use now, use in past and number of programs used within program groups

Category	General Assistance (4 programs)	Child Feeding Programs (3 programs)	Emergency Assistance (3 programs)	Educational Programs (4 programs)
Use now:				
None	66 (61.7%)	88 (92.2%)	97 (90.7%)	95 (88.8%)
one program	17 (15.9%)	16 (15.0%)	8 (7.5%)	9 (8.4%)
two programs	12 (11.2%)	2 (1.9%)	1 (0.9%)	2 (1.9%)
three programs	9 (8.4%)	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.9%)	1 (0.9%)
four programs	3 (2.8%)			
total use now:	**41**	**19**	**10**	**12**
Used past:				
None	60 (56.1%)	51 (47.7%)	64 (59.8%)	66 (61.7%)
one program	17 (15.9%)	33 (30.8%)	34 (31.8%)	32 (29.9%)
two programs	24 (22.4%)	23 (21.5%)	6 (5.6%)	8 (7.5%)
three programs	6 (5.6%)		3 (2.8%)	1 (0.9%)
total used past:	**47**	**56**	**43**	**41**

Table 9 ; Respondents grouped by experience (use now, used only in past) and no experience within each program group.

Category	General Assistance (4 programs)	Child Feeding Programs (3 programs)	Emergency Assistance (3 programs)	Educational Programs (4 programs)
Use 1+ prog. now (may have used in past as well)	41 (38.3%)	19 (17.8%)	10 (9.3%)	12 (11.2%)
Used 1+ prog. past only	32 (29.9%)	51 (47.7%)	41 (38.3%)	37 (34.6%)
Never used	34 (31.8%)	37 (34.6%)	56 (52.3%)	58 (54.2%)

Table 10: Ranking of attitudes of total sample toward program groups

Attitude variable	[a]Ranking of four program groups for each variable N = 107
Total Scale (5 = strongly agree except stigma subscale)	Welfare & Child feeding Emergency & Educational
Access subscale	Child feeding Welfare & Emergency Educational
Need subscale	Welfare & Educational Child feeding & Emergency
Stigma subscale (5 = strongly disagree)	Child feeding Emergency Welfare
Q8. Comfortable with amount of information must provide	Welfare & Child feeding & Emergency
Q 9. Comfortable telling local people I use these programs	Child feeding Emergency Welfare
Q 10. My relatives approve of my use of these programs	Child feeding Welfare & Emergency
Q 11. My close friends approve of my use of these programs	Welfare & Child feeding & Emergency

Ranking of programs: Programs generating most positive attitudes are at top of list. Change in level represents significant differences between program groups. This ranking ignores the differences significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level[yz]

Table 11 : Attitudes of the experience groups toward Group 1 (Welfare programs)

Attitude variable	Total Sample N = 107	Use 1+ programs now N = 41	Use 1+ program only in past N = 32	Never used programs N = 34
Total Scale	3.44±0.54	3.79±0.42^{ab}	3.31±0.47^{b}	3.14±0.51^{a}
Access subscale	3.57±0.63	3.56±0.66	3.71±0.65	3.43±0.57
Need subscale	3.45±0.96	4.20±0.55^{ac}	3.27±0.83^{bc}	2.71±0.83^{ab}
Stigma subscale (5 = strongly disagree)	3.27±0.92	3.69±0.83^{a}	2.83±0.90^{a}	3.20±0.82
Q8. Comfortable with amount of information must provide	3.67±1.01	3.66±1.09	3.66±1.07	3.71±0.87
Q 9. Comfortable telling local people I use these programs	3.05±1.13	3.22±1.04	3.03±1.20	2.85±1.16
Q 10. My relatives approve of my use of these programs	3.84±0.88	3.95±0.97	3.81±0.78	3.74±0.86
Q 11. My close friends approve of my use of these programs	4.05±0.62	4.34±0.53^{ab}	3.97±0.47^{b}	3.77±0.70^{a}

Like superscripts indicate means are significantly different. All differences were significant at $p \leq 0.000$.

Table 12 : Attitudes of the experience groups toward Group 2 (Child Feeding programs)

Attitude variable	Total Sample N = 107	Use 1+ programs now N = 19	Use 1+ program only in past N = 51	Never used programs N = 37
Total Scale	3.53±0.52	3.91±0.40^{a}	3.68±0.44^{b}	3.15±0.44^{ab}
Access subscale	3.84±0.62	4.04±0.44^{a}	3.98±0.65^{b}	3.53±0.54^{ab}
Need subscale	2.87±0.86	3.56±0.80^{ac}	3.05±0.65^{bc}	2.25±0.76^{ab}
Stigma subscale (5 = strongly disagree)	3.80±0.74	4.09±0.51^{a}	3.90±0.73	3.52±0.77^{a}
Q8. Comfortable with amount of information must provide	3.83±0.69	3.89±0.66	4.02±0.62^{a}	3.54±0.73^{a}
Q 9. Comfortable telling local people I use these programs	3.79±0.84	3.95±0.62	3.98±0.81	3.46±0.90
Q 10. My relatives approve of my use of these programs	4.00±0.70	4.21±0.54^{a}	4.14±0.66^{b}	3.70±0.74^{ab}
Q 11. My close friends approve of my use of these programs	4.05±0.59	4.00±0.75	4.22±0.54	3.84±0.50

Like superscripts indicate means are significantly different. Total scale and need subscale differences were significant at $p \leq 0.0000$. Access subscale differences were significant at $p \leq 0.001$. The remaining subscale and questions differences were significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 13 : Attitudes of the experience groups toward Group 3 (Emergency programs)

Attitude variable	Total sample N = 107	Use 1+ programs now N = 10	Use 1+ program only in past N = 41	Never used programs N = 56
Total Scale	3.30 ± 0.56	3.71 ± 0.32^{a}	3.63 ± 0.60^{b}	2.99 ± 0.33^{ab}
Access subscale	3.60 ± 0.63	3.60 ± 0.56	3.90 ± 0.67^{a}	3.38 ± 0.52^{a}
Need subscale	2.71 ± 0.88	3.73 ± 0.49^{a}	3.19 ± 0.72^{b}	2.18 ± 0.66^{ab}
Stigma subscale (5 = strongly disagree)	3.50 ± 0.85	3.83 ± 0.45	3.71 ± 1.02	3.29 ± 0.71
			N = 51 3.73 ± 0.94^{a}	3.29 ± 0.71^{a}
Q8. Comfortable with amount of information must provide	3.70 ± 0.72	4.00 ± 0.47^{a}	4.02 ± 0.65^{b}	3.41 ± 0.68^{ab}
Q 9. Comfortable telling local people I use these programs	3.34 ± 0.96	4.10 ± 0.32^{a}	3.46 ± 0.95	3.11 ± 0.97^{a}
Q 10. My relatives approve of my use of these programs	3.80 ± 0.72	3.90 ± 0.57	3.85 ± 0.73	3.75 ± 0.75
Q 11. My close friends approve of my use of these programs	3.93 ± 0.56	4.10 ± 0.32	3.98 ± 0.52	3.86 ± 0.62

Like superscripts indicate means are significantly different. Total scale, need subscale and Q.8 differences were significant at $p \leq 0.0000$. Access subscale differences were significant at $p \leq 0.001$. The remaining subscale and questions differences were significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 14: Attitudes of the experience groups toward Group 4 (Educational programs)

Attitude variable	Total Sample N = 107	Use 1+ programs now N = 12	Use 1+ program only in past N = 37	Never used programs N = 58
Total Scale (7 questions)	3.16±0.56	3.33±0.57	3.18±0.68	3.11±0.46
Access subscale	3.07±0.58	3.23±0.58	3.14±0.67	2.99±0.52
Need subscale	3.27±1.00	3.47±1.15	3.23±1.04	3.26±0.95

Table 11 - 14 Summary : Ranking of attitudes of each experience group toward each group of programs

Attitude variable	Welfare programs use now = 41 use past = 32 never = 34	Child feeding programs use now = 19 use past = 51 never = 37	Emergency programs use now = 10 use past = 41 never = 56	Education programs use now = 12 use past = 37 never = 58
Total Scale (5 = strongly agree except stigma subscale)	use now use past & never	use now & past never	use now & past never	no difference
Access subscale	no difference	use now & past never	use past (use now) never	no difference
Need subscale	use now use past never	use now use past never	use now & past never	no difference
Stigma subscale (5 = strongly disagree)	use now (never) use past	use now (use past) never	use now + past never	
Q8. Comfortable with amount of information must provide	no difference	use past (use now) never	use now & past never	
Q 9. Comfortable telling local people I use these programs	no difference	no difference	use now (use past) never	
Q 10. My relatives approve of my use of these programs	no difference	use now & past never	no difference	
Q 11. My close friends approve of my use of these programs	use now use past & never	no difference	no difference	

Ranking of use groups: group(s) generating most positive attitudes are at top of list. Change in level represents significant differences between user groups. A group in () indicates it was not significantly different from surrounding user group attitudes.

Table 15 : Attitudes toward "workfare"

Attitude Variable (5 = strongly agree)	Total Sample N = 107	Welfare group Use 1+ programs now N = 41	Welfare group Use 1+ programs only in past N = 32	Welfare group Never used programs N = 34
Q. 1 I feel prepared to support myself and my children as new rules take effect.	4.07±1.02	3.49±1.23^{ab}	4.47±0.72^{b}	4.38±0.60^{a}
Q 2. The new rules will increase the competition I face for local jobs	3.05±1.26	3.56±1.21^{a}	3.00±1.34	2.47±0.99^{a}
Q 3. The new rules will increase the need for subsidized child care in this area.	4.07±0.76	4.10±0.83	4.23±0.61	3.88±0.77
Q 4. The new rules will make it more acceptable in this community to receive welfare assistance.	3.15±0.94	3.02±0.85	3.22±0.98	3.24±1.02
Q 5. The new rules would make my receiving welfare assistance more acceptable to my parents.	N = 104 2.89±0.83	N = 40 2.65±0.83^{a}	N = 31 3.16±0.82^{a}	N = 33 2.88±0.78

Like superscripts indicate means are significantly different. All differences were significant at $p \leq 0.000$, except one^{a} which were significant at $p \leq 0.01$

Table 16: Descriptive statistics for 11 item social support scales
(Scoring: 0 = not helpful, 1 = slightly helpful, 2 = generally helpful, 3 = very helpful, 4 = extremely helpful)

Scale Characteristic	Tangible Support Scale	Information Support Scale
Median	15.00 (range 4 - 32)	13.00 (range 0 - 31)
Distribution	14 or less = 52 (48.6%) 15 or more = 55 (51.4%)	12 or less = 49 (45.8%) 13 or more = 58 (54.2%)
Mean mean score	1.41±0.61 (range 0.36 - 2.91)	1.24 ±0.61 (range 0.0 - 2.82)
Mean sum score	15.50±6.75 (range 4 - 32)	13.59±6.73 (range 0 - 31)
Alpha for sum mean score (Both - less ex-spouse, other 1, 2; information less same + yell pages)	0.6217	0.6684
Split half for sum mean score	0.59	0.60
Correlations with independent variables		
predom. preschool,	mean*, sum*	
predom. school	(nothing sign. with anova)	
significant other	mean*, sum* (sign at 0.05 by anova)	mean* sum* (nothing sign. with anova)
Correlations with dependent variables Welfare		
G10	mean*, sum*	mean*, sum*
Food programs	0	0
Emergency programs		
total	mean*, sum*	
access		mean*, sum*
stigma	mean*, sum*	
CP8		mean*, sum*
C10		mean*, sum*
Education programs	0	0
Workfare		
workfare 4		sum*
workfare 5		sum *

Table 17: Usefulness of selected education program topics
Scoring: 1 = not useful, 2 = somewhat useful, 3 = useful, 4 = very useful

Program Topic	Mean rating N = 107	Very useful No. (%)	Useful No. (%)	Total Very + useful	Not useful
(1) Legal rights in divorce - custody, visitation, support	2.76±1.23	43(40.2%)	22(20.6%)	65(60.8%)	27(25.2%)
(2) Develop budget for household expenses	2.81±1.09	38(35.5%)	28(26.2%)	66(61.7%)	17(15.9%)
(3) Taking charge of your income to save for future	3.14±0.98	48(44.9%)	37(34.6%)	85(79.5%)	11(10.3%)
(4) How to talk to children about important things	3.07±0.90	41(38.3%)	39(36.4%)	80(74.7%)	6(5.6%)
(5) How to manage conflict and argument	3.07±1.01	46(43.0%)	34(31.8%)	80(74.8%)	12(11.2%)
(6) Organization your time to balance work with family activities	N =106 2.85±1.07	36(33.6%)	35(32.7%)	71(66.3%)	17(15.9%)
(7) How to work with children (parenting skills)	2.84±1.04	35(32.7%)	35(32.7%)	70(65.4%)	15(14.0%)
(8) How to choose good child care	2.31±1.26	29(27.1%)	19(17.8%)	48(44.9%)	44(41.1%)
(9) How to shop and cook on a budget	2.44±1.12	22(20.6%)	34(31.8%)	56(52.4%)	31(29.0%)
(10) How to fix fast meals and filling snacks at home	2.55±1.21	33(30.8%)	24(22.4%)	57(53.2%)	31(29.0%)
(11) How to involve children in food shopping and cooking and solve picky eater problems	2.64±1.16	34(31.8%)	26(24.3%)	60(56.1%)	25(23.4%)
(12) How to find programs your community offers to help divorced and single parents	3.05±0.98	43(40.2%)	36(33.6%)	79(73.8%)	10(9.3%)

Program Topic	Mean rating N = 107	Very useful No. (%)	Useful No. (%)	Total Very + useful	Not useful
(13) How to help children adjust to practical and emotional effects of divorce	3.00±1.06	46(43.0%)	29(27.1%)	75(70.1%)	14(13.1%)
(14) How to maintain relations with in-laws and relatives; understanding the emotional effect of divorce on parents	2.61±1.14	28(26.2%)	37(34.6%)	65(60.8%)	28(26.2%)
(15) How to work out grandparents rights after divorce	1.85±1.04	8(7.5%)	26(24.3%)	34(31.8%)	58(54.2%)
(16) How to maintain a job; tips on what your employer will expect and what you can do to meet these expectations	2.05±1.14	17(15.9%)	21(19.6%)	38(35.5%)	50(46.7%)
(17) How to deal with divorce at work-working with your boss to solve child care, child illness and work schedule problems	2.24±1.24	26(24.3%)	20(18.7%)	46(43.0%)	46(43.0%)

Table 18: Educational programs to require at life cycle events.

Question	Response	Top programs listed by those saying yes. (Number times identified.)
• Do you think any educational programs should be required by law in order to get a marriage license?	N = 107 yes: 55 (51.4 %)^{y} no: 52 (48.6 %)	• How to communicate (26) • Money management (22) • How to make marriage work (after vows) (19) • Understanding marriage (before vows) (19) • Parenting skills and issues (15)
• Do you think any educational programs should be required by law in order to get a divorce decree?	N = 106 yes: 44 (41.5 %)^{y} no: 62 (58.5 %)	• Relationship counseling (19) • Helping children cope with divorce (12) • Legal implications and outcomes of divorce (11) • How to get along during divorce (11) • Split parenting (8)
• Do you think any educational programs should be required by law in order to get legal custody of children?	N = 105 yes: 46 (43.8 %) no: 59 (56.2 %)	• Parenting (33) • Psychological evaluation (10) • Legal issues of custody (8) • How to deal with ex-relations (8) • Child development (7)

Like superscripts^{y} indicate significant differences at $p \leq 0.05$

Table 19: Important attributes of an educational program
Scoring: 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, 4 = very important

Program Attribute	Mean rating N = 107	Very important No. (%)	Important No. (%)	Total Very + imp	Make more likely to attend # yes	Not important
(1) The total time needed from you- number of sessions and length of each session	3.39±0.79	59(55.1%)	34 (31.8%)	93(86.9%)		3 (2.8%)
(2) Program restricted to same sex single parents	1.07±0.94	7 (6.5%)	15 (14.0%)	22 (20.5%)	29(27.1%)	61 (57.0%)
(3) Some activities would be group discussion & sharing experiences	2.73±1.05	29(27.1%)	39 (36.4%)	68 (63.5%)	64 (59.8%)	19 (17.8%)
(4) You would be expected to practice or apply what you learned at one session before the next	2.53±0.93	15 (14.0%)	45 (42.1%)	60 (56.1%)	55 (51.4%)	18 (16.8%)
(5) You would learn practical skills or ideas you could use right away	3.34±0.75	50 (46.7%)	47 (43.9%)	97 (90.6%)	97 (90.7%)	4 (3.7%)
(6) Some program information provided on video tape to reduce time away from home	2.93±1.00	36 (33.6%)	40 (37.4%)	76 (71.0%)	76 (71.0%)	13 (12.1%)
(7) Some sessions held by telephone conference call to reduce time away from home	2.01±1.09	12 (11.2%)	27 (25.2%)	39 (36.4%)	45 (42.1%)	50 (46.7%)
(8) Meeting times arranged at the first session to fit the schedules of those signed up	3.30±0.73	45 (42.1%)	53 (49.5%)	98 (91.6%)	N = 106 98 (92.5%)	4 (3.7%)
(9) Free child care provided at the meeting site	N = 106 2.79±1.31	48 (44.9%)	21 (19.6%)	69 (64.5%)	N = 105 69 (65.7%)	33 (30.8%)

Program Attribute	Mean rating N = 107	Very important No. (%)	Important No. (%)	Total Very + imp	Make more likely to attend # yes	Not important
(10) Program is approved by counselor, doctor or clergy	2.50±1.12	23 (21.5%)	37 (34.6%)	60 (56.1%)	59 (55.1%)	30 (28.0%)
(11) Who the sponsor of the program is	2.10±1.13	18 (16.8%)	20 (18.7%)	38 (35.5%)	46 (43.0%)	45 (42.1%)
(12) Meeting located within 10 miles of your home	3.09±0.93	41 (38.3%)	45 (42.1%)	86 (80.4%)	95 (88.8%)	10 (9.3%)

Table 20: Advertising channels
Scoring: 1 = not likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely

Question	Mean rating	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely
• Announcement on the radio	2.24±0.74	45 (42.1%)	43 (40.2%)	19 (17.8%)
• Radio talk show discussion	1.43±0.67	11 (10.3%)	24 (22.4%)	72 (67.3%)
• Listing on TV community bulletin board	1.67±0.77	20(18.7%)	32 (29.9%)	55 (51.4%)
• Article in local newspaper	2.26±0.76	48(44.9%)	39 (36.4%)	20 (18.7%)
• Notice on community bulletin boards at supermarkets, church, school	1.75±0.79	23 (21.5%)	34 (31.8%)	50 (46.7%)
• Ad mailed to your home	2.64±0.60	75 (70.1%)	25 (23.4%)	7 (6.5%)
• Notice brought home by child from school	2.71±0.60	84 (78.5%)	15 (14.0%)	8 (7.5%)
• Word of mouth from other single parent	2.45±0.62	55 (51.4%)	45 (42.1%)	7 (6.5%)

Table 21: Food provisioning habits now and then (before divorce)

Variable	Now N = 107	Then (before divorce) N = 107
1. How often in a month do you make major food shopping trips?	N = 104 2.19 ± 1.08^{a} 1 - 2x: 74 (71.1%) 3 - 4x: 29 (27.9%)	N = 107 2.84 ± 1.26^{a} 1 - 2x: 48 (44.9%) 3 - 4x: 55 (51.4%)
2. Who usually goes on major shopping trips?		
you	N = 106 yes = 105 (98.1%) no = 1 (0.9%)	N = 106 yes = 102 (95.3%) no = 4 (3.7%)
one child	N = 105 yes = 42 (39.3%) no = 63 (58.9%)	N = 106 yes = 46 (43.0%) no = 60 (56.1%)
more than one child	N = 105 yes = 22 (20.6%) no = 83 (77.6%)	N = 105 yes = 32 (29.9%) no = 73 (68.2%)
partner /significant other - now spouse - then	N = 102 yes = 16 (15.0%) no = 86 (80.4%)	N = 106 yes = 38 (35.5%) no = 68 (63.6%)
a relative	N = 106 yes = 16 (15.0%) no = 90 (84.1%)	N = 106 yes = 8 (7.5%) no = 98 (91.6%)
ex spouse	N = 106 yes = 1(0.9%) no = 105 (98.1%)	
anyone else	N = 106 yes = 8 (7.5%) no = 98 (91.6 %)	N = 106 no = 106 (99.1%)
Summary shopping groups:	N = 106	N = 106
Mother shops alone	31 (29.5%)	29 (27.4%)
Adult and child(ren)	57 (54.3%)	62 (58.5%)
Other (other adults shops or mom and other adult shops)	17 (16.2%)	15 (14.2%)
11. Do you –		
own a freezer separate from the refrigerator?	N = 107 yes = 53 (49.5%) no = 54 (50.5%)	N = 107 yes = 63 (58.9%) no = 44 (41.1%)
raise a vegetable garden regularly?	yes = 22 (20.6%)^{a} no = 85 (79.4%)	yes = 44 (41.1%)^{a} no = 63 (58.9%)
can or freeze food in season for later use?	yes = 50 (46.7%) no = 57 (53.3%)	yes = 59 (55.1%) no = 48 (44.9%)
serve game killed by household members, relatives or friends regularly?	yes = 36 (33.6%)^{a} no = 71 (66.4%)	yes = 57 (53.3%)^{a} no = 50 (46.7%)

Like superscripts indicate significant differences ^{a} $p \leq 0.000$; ^{b} $p \leq 0.001$; ^{c} $p \leq 0.01$; ^{y} $p \leq 0.05$

Table 22: Frequency of meals from specific sources per week and month now

Variable (Average)	per Week N = 107	per Month N = 107
Number of evening meals you eat with children prepared from food in your pantry	4.88±1.78 range: 0 - 7 none: 1 (0.9%) 1 - 3: 21 (19.5%) 4 - 7: 85 (79.5%)	20.06±7.23 range: 4 - 30 4 - 14: 21 (19.5%) 15 - 21: 35 (32.7%) 22 - 30: 51 (48.1%)
Number of meals you eat with children in restaurant of any kind at any time of day	0.77±0.96 range: 0 - 4 none: 52 (48.6%) one: 38 (35.5%) 2 - 4: 17 (15.9%)	3.55±3.52 range: 0 - 16 none: 15 (14.0%) 1 - 2: 41 (38.3%) 3+: 51 (47.7%)
Number of times you eat take-out food at home with your children	0.75±0.85 range: 0 - 4 none: 47 (43.9%) 1 - 2: 56 (51.3%) 3+: 4 (3.8%)	3.32±2.97 range: 0 - 16 none: 13 (12.1%) 1 - 4 : 75 (70.0%) 5 +: 19 (17.8%)
Number of times your children eat meals with relatives (including eating with ex-spouse) without you present.	1.61±2.46 range: 0 - 15 none: 52 (48.6%) 1 - 2: 30 (28.0%) 3+: 25 (23.3%)	6.91±8.92 range: 0 - 60 none: 20 (18.7%) 1 - 4: 42 (38.5%) 5+: 45 (41.8%)
Number of times your children eat meals with family friends without you present)	0.59±1.67 range : 0 -10 none: 85 (79.4%) 1 - 2: 13 (12.1%) 3+: 9 (8.5%)	2.43±5.94 range: 0 - 40 none: 57 (53.3%) 1 - 2: 29 (27.1%) 3+: 21 (19.6%)

Table 23: Money saving habits of total sample

Mean value is based on the scale where 1 = every time, 2 = most of the time, 3 = some of the time, and 4 = almost never.

Variable: Habits	Now N = 107	Then (before the divorce) N = 107
How often do you use **coupons** on food shopping trips?	2.44±1.02	2.46±1.01
	every time: 23 (21.5%)	every time: 21 (19.6%)
	most of time: 33 (30.8%)	most of time: 36 (33.6%)
	some of time: 32 (29.9%)	some of time: 30 (28.0%)
	almost never: 19 (17.8%)	almost never: 20 (18.7%)
How often do you purchase **generic** or in-store brands on food shopping trips?	2.02 ± 0.89^{a}	2.62 ± 1.04^{a}
	every time: 36 (33.6 %)	every time: 18 (16.8 %)
	most of time: 38 (35.5%)	most of time: 32 (29.9%)
	some of time: 28 (26.2%)	some of time: 30 (28.0%)
	almost never: 5 (4.7%)	almost never: 27 (25.2%)
How often do you check **circulars or ads** for specials before going food shopping? (This includes checking a circular picked up in store itself.)	1.95 ± 1.10^{a}	2.41 ± 1.11^{a}
	every time: 53 (49.5%)	every time: 30 (28.0 %)
	most of time: 20 (18.7%)	most of time: 25 (23.4%)
	some of time: 20 (18.7%)	some of time: 30 (28.0%)
	almost never: 14 (13.1%)	almost never: 22 (20.6%)

Like superscripts indicate significant differences ^{a} $p \le 0.000$; ^{b} $p \le 0.001$; ^{c} $p \le 0.01$

Table 24: Children's involvement in food chores now

Variable - NOW	Involved N = 107 na = child too young	Sex distribution of those involved
Food shopping on own: Any child regularly doing some of the food shopping for the family (on their own, parent not present)?	yes: 6 (5.6%) no: 40 (37.4%) na: 61 (57.0%)	female: 4 (66.7%) male: 2 (33.3%) both: 0
Helping food shop: Any child regularly helping you or the main food shopper with the food shopping in the family (go to store regularly with you or main food shopper and are given role in selecting foods)?	yes: 49 (45.8%) no: 45 (42.1%) na : 13 (12.1%)	female: 15 (30.6%) male: 26 (53.1%) both: 8 (16.3%)
Fixing meals for themselves: Any child regularly fixing meals for themselves now. (Any meal counts; includes micro waving, heating soup, making sandwiches, etc.)?	yes: 73 (68.2%) no: 13 (12.1%) na: 21 (19.6%)	female: 20 (27.4%) male: 31 (42.5%) both: 22 (30.1%)
Helping fix meals for others: Any child regularly expected to help in preparing meals for other family members?	yes: 15 (14.0%) no: 73 (68.2%) na : 19 (17.8%)	female: 7 (46.7%) male: 3 (20.0%) both: 5 (33.3%)
Clean up: Any child regularly expected to clean up after meals (including helping you, helping sibling or doing it on their own)?	yes: 74 (69.2%) no: 27 (25.2%) na : 6 (5.6%)	female: 20 (27.0%) male: 28 (37.8%) both: 26 (35.1%)

Table 25. Effect of grouping households by sex of child on selected food variables

Variable	Total sample N = 107	Households with female children ≥7 yr. vs. others	Households with female children ≥13 yr. vs. others
Distribution		40 (37.4%) 67 (62.6%)	16 (15.0%) 91 (85.0%)
No shopping trips /mo now	N = 104 2.19±1.08	2.08±1.09 (N =39) 2.26±1.08	2.07±1.16 2.21±1.07 (N =89)
No. shopping trips/mo then	2.84±1.26	2.80±1.26 2.87±1.26	2.50±1.26 2.90±1.26
Any child regularly doing some of the food shopping for family on own	yes: 6 (5.6%)	yes: 4(18.18%) yes: 2 (8.33%)	yes: 3 (23.08%) yes : 3 (9.09%)
Any child regularly helping main food shopper with food shopping	yes: 49 (45.8%)	yes: 13 (32.50)^b yes: 36 (66.67%)^b	yes: 4 (25.00%)^y yes: 45 (57.69%)^y
Any child regularly fixing meals for themselves	yes : 73 (68.2%)	yes: 37 (94.87%)^y yes: 36 (76.60%)^y	yes: 16 (100.0%) yes: 57 (81.43%)
Any child regularly helping fix meals for others	yes: 15 (14.0%)	yes: 9 (12.00%) yes: 6 (23.68%)	yes: 4 (26.67%) yes: 11 (15.07%)
Any child regularly expected to help clean up after meals	yes (74(69.2%)	yes: 31 (77.50%) yes: 43 (45.99%)	yes : 14 (87.5%) yes: 60 (70.59%)

Like superscripts indicate significant differences ^{a} $p \le 0.000$; ^{b} $p \le 0.001$; ^{c} $p \le 0.01$; ^{y} $p \le 0.05$

Table 26: Feelings about food security for the whole sample

Variable: Security	Now N = 107	Then (before the divorce) N = 107
How do you feel about the **amount of money** you can spend on food?	3.30 ± 1.03^a much more than : 5 (4.7%) somewhat more : 16 (15.0%) just enough: 42 (39.3%) somewhat less : 30 (28.0%) much less than: 14 (13.1%)	2.64 ± 1.06^a much more than : 15 (14.0%) somewhat more : 36 (33.6%) just enough: 34 (31.8%) somewhat less : 17 (15.9%) much less than: 5 (4.7%)
How do you feel about the **food available** in this house in an average month?	1.73 ± 0.56^b enough of kinds want to eat: 35 (32.7%) enough but not kinds want: 66 (61.7%) sometimes not enough: 6 (5.6%)	1.45 ± 0.65^b enough of kinds want to eat: 67 (62.6%) enough but not kinds want: 33 (30.8%) sometimes not enough: 6 (5.6%) often not enough: 1 (0.9%)
In an average month, how often do you **run low** on food because of lack of money? (Running low means there isn't enough on hand to prepare a meal)	1.59 ± 0.96 never: 70 (65.4%) 1 - 2 days: 19 (17.8%) 3 - 5 days: 12 (11.2%) 6 - 10 days: 4 (3.7%) 11+ days: 2 (1.9%)	1.42 ± 0.92 never: 83 (77.6%) 1 - 2 days: 11 (10.3%) 3 - 5 days: 8 (7.5%) 6 - 10 days: 2 (1.9%) 11+ days: 3 (2.8%)
How **confident** or sure of yourself do you feel about being able to provide food for your family every day of the month?	2.16 ± 1.13^y very confident: 37 (34.6%) confident: 39 (36.4%) not sure: 9 (8.4%) somewhat lacking: 21 (19.6%) not at all confident: 1 (0.9%)	1.83 ± 1.19^y very confident: 59 (55.1%) confident: 27 (25.2%) not sure: 6 (5.6%) somewhat lacking: 11 (10.3%) not at all confident: 3 (2.8%) other: 1 (0.9%)

Like superscripts indicate significant differences $^a\ p \le 0.000$; $^b\ p \le 0.001$; $^c\ p \le 0.01$; $^y\ p \le 0.05$

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Sample

The postcard return rate from the flyers distributed was low, indicating how difficult it is to find single, divorced women willing to participate in research studies. Because of time and money constraints, we ended our interviews after recruiting 110 volunteers, rather than the target of 120. We completed 107 interviews instead of 110, due to last minute cancellations by respondents.

After getting a poor response through agencies, we turned to mailing flyers to individuals listed in each county's 1995-1996 divorce records. This should have increased the possibility of a more representative sample, according to Karney et al. (1995). While our sample was not racially diverse, it appears to represent the racial pattern in these six counties. A majority of our sample were lower income, less educated women. Karney et al. reported obtaining a group of higher income, well educated volunteers from marriage license records, but they were using records in a large urban county as their source. In our sample, 68% of the women lived alone, and the remainder lived with other adults, proportions similar to those found by Winkler (1993) in her examination of the Current Population Survey of 1986. A majority of our sample were one or two-child families. This may not reflect actual numbers of children since we asked for information only on those children currently living at home and 18 years of age or less. Some of our respondents had older children not living at home, whom we chose to ignore because of our interest in the current economic situation in the household. Older children living at home were counted as adults. Therefore, this is not a representative sample of all divorced mothers in rural Pennsylvania; rather, it has greater representation of rural, lower income, non-college educated, divorced women with minor children.

Independent Variables

We chose to use the mothers' education level and the yearly family income as independent measures of human capital rather than the Socioeconomic Index (SEI) based on occupational status. This decision was based on both a concern for the time involved in determining SEI for this small a sample and the male occupational bias of some of these indices (Smith & Graham, 1995). Our social support scales did not have the internal consistency of the single scale used by Letiecq, Anderson, and Koblinsky (1996), but our sample was more heterogeneous than theirs. The extent of covariance between our informational and tangible scales (37%) was similar to the 35% found between the tangible and informational scales used by Wan, Jaccard, and Ramey (1996), which supported our decision to keep two scales rather than combine their scores.

Because the response from divorce education classes was so poor, we could not use participation (or no participation) in divorce education classes as an independent variable. Thus, we could not compare attitudes or educational program needs among these two groups of women.

Use of Community Assistance Programs

In this sample, use now and use in the past were heavily concentrated in federal and state assistance programs, specifically domestic relations use now and Welfare, Food Stamps, and WIC use now and in the past. Use of food education (EFNEP) and Head Start, preventative (county children and youth services), educational, and career development programs, as well as support groups, was low. The proportions familiar with these less frequently used programs were also low. But the number of those familiar with the programs who indicated that they might use them if they qualified was high. These data suggest that lack of knowledge or awareness of these programs may be one of the main reasons they are not used.

Recommendations

- Increase the visibility of the local county and 1-800 information and referral numbers for human services.
- Update county listings of human services in phone books and other locations to include a listing of services specifically for divorced or separated individuals, similar to the listings for battered women, alcohol and drug abuse, pregnancy, and mental retardation.
- Make the list of services for divorced or separated individuals more inclusive of the educational programs available.

Attitudes Toward Community Assistance Programs

Based on our attitude scales, this sample differentiated between groups of programs. Welfare and child feeding programs were viewed more positively than emergency or educational programs. This differentiation was based on the women's views about access, need, and stigma. Child feeding programs were viewed positively because of perceptions of easy access and the least stigma. Welfare programs were viewed positively because the women indicated a greater need for this program and felt moderately positive about access. Emergency programs were viewed less positively because of less perceived need and intermediate levels of perceived stigma. These women were neutral about access to and indicated only some need for educational programs. The last two programs had the least positive total attitude scores. They associated the most stigma with Welfare programs, which was confirmed by responses to a question about a woman's level of comfort in telling local people about use of these programs. They were least comfortable talking about use of Welfare programs, compared to discussing use of child feeding and emergency programs.

Some of the distinctions among program groups was altered when we examined the effect of income level and the predominate type of children in the household (called household child type in the Results) on total attitude scale and subscale scores. When total attitude scores were examined for the two income groups, the lower income group was most positive about Welfare and child feeding programs, moderately positive about emergency programs, and least positive about educational programs, while the higher income group was more positive about child feeding programs than all the others. When total attitudes were examined by predominate type of children, those with predominately preschool children were more positive about child feeding programs than any of the others while those with older children were more positive about Welfare and child feeding programs than the other two. Thus, the opinions of those with lower income and with predominately older children strongly influenced attitudes toward Welfare, while ages of children strongly influenced attitudes toward child feeding programs.

Grouping women by income or predominate type of children had no effect on the access subscale results. Child feeding programs were viewed as more accessible than Welfare and emergency programs, but these women were neutral about education programs.

However, grouping women by income or by predominate type of children did affect scores on the need subscale. The low income group had the greatest need for Welfare programs, some need for education programs, and the least need for emergency programs while the higher income group needed education programs more than any others. The need for Welfare programs by the lower income group contrasted with the need of the higher income group for education programs. In contrast, those with predominately preschool children needed Welfare, child feeding, and education programs more than emergency programs, while all other households needed Welfare and education programs more than child feeding and emergency programs. Those with predominately preschool children needed both Welfare and child feeding programs while other households without preschoolers needed Welfare programs more.

Examining the stigma subscale for the total sample indicated that these women perceived the greatest stigma associated with Welfare, an intermediate amount associated with emergency programs, and the least with child feeding programs. Grouping women by income and by predominate type of children affected responses to the stigma subscale similarly. Higher income women and households with older children perceived the same pattern of stigma as the total sample, e.g., the greatest stigma associated with Welfare, an intermediate amount associated with emergency program, and the least with child feeding programs. But lower income women and households with predominately preschool children perceived greater and similar stigma for both Welfare and emergency programs and the least for child feeding programs.

Using income level and predominate type of children groups to examine the responses to question 9 produced a pattern identical to that of the stigma subscale. Thus, those who had less need for these programs distinguished among the three programs when examining their comfort in talking about their use, while those who needed these programs only recognized two levels of comfort, that for child feeding programs and that for Welfare and emergency programs.

In summary, these results indicate that 1) child feeding programs were the most accessible and educational programs the least; 2) the need for Welfare programs was greatest among those with lower income; 3) those with predominately preschool children had as much need for child feeding programs, and 4) use of Welfare, child feeding, and emergency programs carried a stigma.

(All mean responses were greater than 3 = neutral, not sure.) Regardless of income or household child type, these women agreed that use of child feeding programs carried the least stigma. Those with the least need for Welfare or emergency programs (the higher income group) associated the worst stigma with Welfare and less with emergency programs, while those with the most need for Welfare (lower income group) did not associate as much stigma with its use as those with less need. This suggests that need and/or use modifies perceptions of stigma.

This idea was supported by the attitude scores of our sample who were current users, past users, and non-users. Women using Welfare now, and current and past users of child feeding programs and emergency programs all had significantly more positive total attitude scores for these programs than never users. Some of this was due to need. Current users of Welfare and child feeding programs always had greater need subscale scores than past users who had greater need scores than never users. Current and past users of emergency programs had higher need subscale scores than never users. While use made no difference in attitudes toward access to Welfare programs, current and past users of child feeding and emergency programs viewed access more positively than never users.

Current users consistently perceived less stigma associated with these three groups of programs than never users; past users of emergency programs also perceived less stigma than never users. All groups of users indicated similar comfort levels when talking to local people about their use of Welfare or child feeding programs, but current users of emergency programs were significantly more comfortable talking about emergency programs than never users. We have found no other references that document the effect of use on attitudes of divorced, single mothers about these groupings of community assistance programs. However, these findings contradict those of Ogren (1973) who found that those with the least knowledge of public Welfare had the most positive attitudes toward Welfare recipients, but our findings support those of Keith (1980) who found those familiar with social work had more positive attitudes toward social programs.

The quantitative findings that Welfare and child feeding programs were needed was confirmed by the qualitative data; the majority of our interviewees reported that the tangible benefits from each of these programs were needed and appreciated. The qualitative data also confirmed that child feeding programs were more accessible. Interviewees felt that it was easy to understand the guidelines and enroll in WIC and that staff in WIC offices were generally more pleasant, caring, supportive, and accommodating than staff in Welfare offices.

The qualitative data also indicate that opinions about Welfare eligibility rules differed among the women; some thought rules should be tightened, others that rules were too strict, leading to loss of benefits or inability of those in need to qualify. On the other hand, the majority of interviewees indicated that they and the larger community approved of WIC eligibility rules, especially for allowing recipients to hold a job and still be able to receive benefits. They approved WIC rules because benefits are restricted to certain foods and to a very needy and blameless population, young children. Dodds, Ahluwalia, and Baligh (1996) reported that participants in community assistance programs in North Carolina also praised WIC rules and agency personnel.

Interviewees reported that stigma was associated with use of both Welfare and child feeding programs, but that the degree differed. More users of Welfare reported experiencing stigma than users of child feeding programs. The qualitative data highlighted how those not receiving assistance in an economically depressed area may use stigma as a leveling device or way of punishing those getting assistance. In particular, use of Food Stamps or a medical card, family history, or where one lived identified people as Welfare users and sometimes prompted application of stigma, supporting Goffman's model (Rogers-Dillon, 1995). Over a quarter of our interviewees indicated that Welfare staff themselves generated feelings of stigma among recipients, with onerous paperwork, demeaning reporting and documentation requirements, and unpleasant attitudes. Use of WIC vouchers could generate some reaction in grocery stores, but not as often as Food Stamps. Like Rogers-Dillon (1995) and Jarrett (1996), we found that stigma was produced by interaction of recipients with non-recipients in social settings, but our results from our interviews provided new insight into why stigma is applied in economically depressed areas.

We also found evidence to support the idea that stigmatized behavior is more acceptable in rural areas where subcultures form to support it (Rank & Hirschl, 1993). Interviewees in three counties reported WIC was more acceptable because the communities lacked high paying jobs and many needed WIC. Several interviewees also mentioned that Welfare was more accepted in economically depressed counties where jobs were not available.

Our qualitative data also outlined what divorced mothers felt they needed in order to avoid using Welfare. Education and training to obtain employment and free, subsidized, or cheaper childcare were mentioned most often. They also expressed the need for career development skills and for more jobs providing a living wage, which supports the findings of McLaughlin and Sachs (1988). A significant number felt divorced, single mothers needed to improve their sense of family responsibility and self-esteem prior to acquiring job skills and obtaining employment. Some of these women needed money management, parenting, and home economics skills (or job readiness training) which could affect their ability to perform waged work.

Recommendations

- Retain some form of general assistance for single, divorced mothers in need. The need expressed in this study was significant, widespread, and unlikely to disappear in the majority of these counties.
- Continue to provide some assistance for needy, single parents with eligibility based on the age of their children, i.e., provide certain benefits for each needy child from birth to age five or eight. These benefits could be a combination of Food Stamps, medical card, and/or subsidized childcare linked to holding a job. This would focus some workfare benefits on children, instead of adults, and address a need expressed by our respondents, many of whom said they only went on Welfare because of their children. In addition, this is a criterion for WIC benefits which is considered acceptable by our interviewees, many of whom were critical of Welfare programs that provided assistance to adults. Such a change could lessen stigma associated with use of assistance (workfare).
- Change eligibility rules for general assistance programs so participants can work, save some money, and still receive some needed benefits such as Food Stamps and subsidized childcare. In particular, increase assistance staff awareness that divorced, single mothers cannot depend on consistent child support payments, that they need a car for transportation (auto ownership should not be penalized when determining benefits), and that complying with regulations is often complicated by caring for children.
- Provide some evening office hours at general assistance offices to accommodate the schedules of working parents. Consider opening satellite offices in large counties.
- Increase subsidized childcare benefits and the number of qualified childcare providers available in rural areas. Support or provide programs that increase the skills of childcare providers and enforce licensing of childcare providers.

- Implement a program to change the attitudes and prejudices of the assistance (workfare) staff where needed. Help staff understand the client perspective and increase their sensitivity to human need and suffering.
- Move Food Stamp benefits to the electronic debit card system as soon as possible in rural counties (This eliminates discomfort at the grocery store and providing change as cash). Consider restricting use of Food Stamps to certain staple food products. This may also lessen stigma associated with their use.
- Focus job training programs for single parents receiving general assistance, first on building self-esteem, followed by skill assessment and skill training. Expressly tailor some training programs for single, divorced mothers who may need additional help with self-esteem before moving onto skill assessment and training. Some of our interviewees stressed that divorced women need to develop a feeling of worthiness to be able to obtain employment.
- Consider publicizing changes in general assistance (workfare) rules to accommodate divorced parents of minor children so that all needy minor children can benefit. The children and families ignored now will contribute to health and social problems in the future.

Attitudes Toward Workfare

Based on the quantitative data, as workfare takes effect, current users of Welfare indicated that they felt significantly less prepared to support their families and that they will face more competition for jobs than never users of Welfare. Having only a GED (or less) increased the feeling they will face more competition for jobs compared to those with at least a high school education. Our sample strongly agreed that workfare would increase the need for subsidized childcare. They did not feel that converting Welfare to workfare would make receiving assistance more acceptable to their parents, but they were a little more optimistic about this change increasing acceptance of Welfare use in the community. Surprisingly, those with higher informational support scores were the most optimistic about community acceptance.

In the qualitative questions, the women were reminded of the new workfare rules as they were asked what educational programs would help single parents avoid using Welfare. Their answers supported the need for subsidized childcare and highlighted the need for help in building self-esteem and for career development and job training programs. However, combining qualitative findings from section H about why stigma may be applied with the findings on concern about competition for jobs suggests that stigma will continue to be associated with receipt of workfare benefits in those counties with limited economic opportunity for all residents. Duncan and Lambroghini (1994) found that class structure was more obvious in areas where economic opportunity was limited. Brown and Hirschl (1995) proposed that a class structure might inhibit upward mobility. The data in section H suggest that stigma can be used as a leveling device when some members of a community are seen to receive benefits from which others feel excluded, as in access to jobs. This suggests the stigma associated with general assistance will not decrease as it is converted to workfare, but could increase in economically depressed counties. Offering employers incentives to give workfare recipients jobs in economically depressed counties may increase the stigma applied to workfare recipients and the division between the haves and have-nots. Thus, economic development that builds an employment base able to pay a 'living wage' to all residents is extremely important in these rural counties.

Recommendations

- Increase economic opportunities for businesses that will provide jobs with livable wages and benefits in rural counties. These jobs should be available for all residents and not preferentially assigned to those on workfare.
- Increase job training opportunities for all residents in rural counties.
- Focus workfare training on making recipients competitive for job opportunities and eliminate the need for employer incentives to hire workfare recipients.

Educational Program Needs

These women indicated that programs addressing money management, conflict management, communication, and children's divorce adjustment as well as instruction on locating community programs that help divorced and single parents would be most useful to them now. This supports the conclusion of Furstenberg and Teitler (1994) that couples who divorce may have poor communication skills and high levels of conflict. Interestingly, programs on maintaining a job were considered only somewhat useful to the women in our study in comparison to the first five programs they favored. However, assessments of usefulness of programs shifted significantly when women were grouped by household structure or predominate type of children in household. Women living alone indicated that programs on children's divorce adjustment were more useful than those regarding living with others. Households grouped by predominate types of children indicated different programs were useful now; households with predominately younger children found programs about communicating with children, parenting skills, choosing child care, and food management more useful than those with predominately teenage children. In addition, those with predominately younger children indicated that programs dealing with maintaining a job were somewhat useful, while those with predominately teenage children indicated these were not useful.

The qualitative data from section K revealed the educational program needs of divorced, single parents which reinforced the importance of providing programs about money management and parenting skills, as well as programs to help the divorced, single parent address children's needs during divorce. They also expressed a need for information about the legal aspects of divorce and support groups.

Important Attributes of an Educational Program and Advertising Channels

These women clearly identified the most important attributes to be scheduling meetings to fit the time constraints of those involved, providing practical skills, and locating the meeting within 10 miles of their residence as well as the total time required by the program. Studies conducted in urban settings (Thompson, Grow, Ruma, & Burke, 1993; Powell & Eisenstadt, 1988; Lengua et al., 1992; Meyers, 1993) suggested that these attributes might be important to the success of educational programs. Our data confirm that these attributes are as important in rural settings. The importance of other attributes varied depending on whether the mother lived alone or with others, and the predominate type of children in the household. Households with predominately preschool or school age children considered providing childcare and information on video tape or conducting sessions by telephone conference call as well as who endorses the program more important than those with predominately teenage children.

The qualitative data in section K indicated that time constraints imposed by work or children's schedules, fees, limited transportation, inconvenient location, and lack of interest were major reasons educational programs are not attended. This corroborates some of the attributes listed above. The qualitative data also revealed that some parents may not attend programs because they are ashamed to admit that they need help and are uncomfortable discussing personal information, being involved in a discussion group, or participating in role playing activities. Similar reasons surfaced in the report of Spoth, Redmond, Hockaday, and Shin (1996), based on a survey of rural families in Iowa. Our sample clearly wanted a leader who was like themselves, which supported the findings of Warren and Amara (1985). These data indicate that the task of designing educational programs for this audience should include an initial needs assessment in order to tailor the program to the audience.

The data on advertising channels to promote the programs clearly indicated that ads mailed to divorced mothers' homes or notices brought home by children were the most likely to get the mothers' attention. Some of these women also suggested that churches could be a channel for reaching some divorced mothers. We did not ask about more obvious channels, such as distributing flyers through state operated agencies providing general assistance, support payments, or WIC benefits. However, our experience with the flyers used to recruit our volunteers suggests that this would not be more successful than mailing flyers.

Recommendations

- Conduct a local needs assessment of the target audience to determine topics of most interest, opinions about locations, comfort with program delivery methods, and childcare needs. (Alternatively, conduct some of this assessment with those attending the first meeting.)
- Offer money management, communication, conflict management, parenting, divorce adjustment, choosing childcare, and food management programs as adjuncts to workfare job training programs and tailor these programs to the interests of the target audience. Form partnerships with local community groups to provide these programs.

- Use peer educators (divorced, single mothers) to deliver some of these programs.
- Advertise these programs through mailings to those listed in county courthouse divorce records each year. Advertising could also be distributed at Welfare, WIC, and domestic relations offices.
- Offer programs at a variety of locations in the county. Involve those attending in planning meeting times and use of alternative delivery methods, such as telephone conference calls, and video tapes.
- Be prepared to present program concepts in a variety of ways using traditional and non-traditional methods.

Educational Programs at Marriage, Divorce, and Award of Custody of Minor Children

A majority of our sample agreed that educational programs should be required only to obtain a marriage license. A significantly greater majority rejected requiring educational programs to receive a divorce decree, and a simple majority rejected requiring programs to receive legal custody of minor children. Those permanently separated 2.5 yr. or more, living alone, and with more than a high school education were more strongly in favor of requiring educational programs to receive a marriage license. A simple majority of those living alone also favored requiring educational programs to receive a divorce decree. Those most opposed to requiring educational programs (4:1) to obtain a divorce decree lived with other adults. The major types of programs that these women suggested be required were very similar to the programs they highlighted in the quantitative and qualitative questions about programs of most use to them now. But they also suggested that programs about understanding marriage (before vows) and how to make marriage work (after vows) should be part of the marriage license package.

A majority of women were willing to require that everyone who marries complete certain educational programs (an 'equal' requirement) but were reluctant to force those whose marriage had dissolved to complete an educational program (a 'penalizing' requirement). Many of the programs that they suggested be required for the marriage license were part of the high school curriculum at one time, but such classes were always electives. These results suggest that having everyone who wishes to marry share an educational requirement may be most acceptable to the public. However, it might be wise to introduce such a requirement with a financial incentive. This does carry the danger of inducing more common law marriages or increasing travel to an adjacent state to marry.

Recommendation

- Consider introducing two levels of marriage license fees uniformly across the state. The higher priced marriage license would not require any prenuptial education programs about marriage, raising children, communication, or money management. The lower priced marriage license would require a certain number of credits or hours of appropriate class work, which might be acquired through secondary schools, community colleges, or private counselors. The price for these courses would have to be lower than the price for the alternative marriage license.

Food Provisioning Patterns Now vs. Then

The event of divorce affected the number of major shopping trips per month as our sample shop about twice a month now, compared to closer to three times a month when married. Household structure, predominate type of children, and income level did not affect this general pattern. This change is similar to the difference Lino and Guthrie (1994) found in shopping pattern between single and married mothers. The divorced mother goes on most of the shopping trips in these families now, although children are involved with shopping in about half the households. Both divorced mothers living alone and lower income households involved more children in shopping than their counterparts. But involvement of children was a function of age; children's involvement in shopping was high in households with predominately preschool children (more than 80%) and dropped in households with older children.

Gardening, canning, freezing, and serving game provided by family or friends are economical ways to stretch food dollars. About half of this sample now owned a freezer separate from the refrigerator and canned or froze food for later use. Only 20% were raising a garden and 30% were serving game now. Fewer of these women were raising a garden and serving game now than in the past. This pattern was affected by household composition; those living with others were more likely to own a freezer and raise a garden, while those with predominately teenage children were more likely to raise a garden.

The event of a divorce creates changes in shopping frequency and use of more economical ways to supplement food supplies. The qualitative data supported the quantitative data. Many women (69%) reported buying food in large quantities and freezing it for later use; far fewer (13% at most) reported canning and freezing, raising a garden, or using game. Nineteen percent indicated that divorce led to loss of time to garden, can, and freeze food as well as access to game for family meals. Using a freezer to stretch food appears to be retained after the divorce, but gardening and using game decreased, unless the divorced mother was living with others.

Frequency of Meals from Specific Sources Now

These women reported preparing two thirds (20/30) of their evening meals from foods in their pantry in an average month. However, mothers living alone reported preparing such meals less often than those living with others. This probably reflects their work and time constraints. Very few meals per month (3% or 3/90) were eaten in restaurants or prepared from take-out food (3%), despite the general trend for families to eat more often in restaurants (Smallwood, Blaylock, Lutz, & Blisard, 1995). Of course, this may partly reflect the limited choice of restaurants in rural areas (Smallwood et al.). Relatives were an important source of meals for children, especially preschool and school age children. In the qualitative data, nearly half the women (44%) reported that they ate with their parents, or grandparents fed the grandchildren. Arrangements with relatives were informal or formal, arising out of mother's work schedule and childcare needs. Thus, relatives, especially children's grandparents, were an important part of the food system for almost half of the divorced mothers in this study.

Money Saving Habits Now vs. Then

Using coupons carefully, buying generic brands, and considering items on sale are other ways to stretch the family food budget. Neither the event of divorce nor any of the other independent variables tested detected any change in the use of coupons by our sample. Apparently, in this sample, divorce and its subsequent changes did not lead to more use of coupons. However, now, most of these women were buying generic brands and using circulars and sales most of the time, regardless of income or any other independent variable, while in the past they did this less often. The event of divorce forced them to use generics and watch sales more often. The importance of these tactics was also evident in the qualitative data where over half the sample (50-57%) mentioned using generic brands and shopping specials and sales as well as using coupons, when asked what creative things they do to insure enough food for their family.

Only tangible support levels appeared to make a small difference in this pattern of use of generic brands and circulars, but it affected perceptions of use of circulars in the past, not now, indicating that many of those with little tangible support now also lacked tangible support in the past.

Children's Involvement in Food Chores Now

Involving children in food shopping, preparation, and clean up chores could help divorced mothers, especially those who live alone, deal with the day-to-day food chores. Divorced mothers living alone might be more likely to involve children of both sexes, but there might be a gender bias for females rather than males to assume certain chores at certain ages. The pattern in our sample confirmed some of these expectations. In the total sample, when a job carried more responsibility, such as doing the shopping for the whole family or fixing meals for other family members, the majority of children reported doing this were female, although the number was small. More children were reported to help food shop and clean up. More males than females were involved in food shopping, but this probably reflects the fact that there were more households with male children in our sample than households with female children (See Table 5).

Our finding that over two thirds of these households reported children were regularly fixing meals for themselves confirms trends seen in other national surveys (Anonymous, 1991). This occurred more often in households with predominately school age and teenage children. Household structure did not affect the prevalence of this assignment, but significantly more higher income households reported children were fixing meals for themselves. It is unclear whether this is behavior unique to divorced mothers.

A higher proportion (although not significantly) of divorced mothers living alone or with lower income reported involving children in food shopping, and these were significantly more likely to be predominately preschool children. Grouping the sample into households with female children age 7 or older vs. all others only suggested a gender bias toward more girls fixing meals for themselves than boys. Our other grouping by gender produced very unbalanced samples with results difficult to interpret. In general, we would need a larger sample of divorced, single mothers in order to explore gender bias in household work assignment with any confidence.

Feelings about Food Security Now vs. Then

Based on data from the 1989-90 Continuing Survey of Food Intake, Lino and Guthrie (1994) reported that a greater proportion of married mothers than single mothers (78% vs. 58%) agreed that they now had "enough of the kinds of food we want to eat." Only 33% of our sample of divorced, single mothers agreed with this statement about enough now; instead, 60% agreed that they had enough but not the kinds of foods they wanted to eat. Although the mean response indicated that most of these women were confident about feeding their family now, about 29% of our sample were not sure, or lacking in confidence that they could do this now. While 65% reported they never ran low on food because of lack of money, 35% reported running low, mostly 1-5 days a month now. A few reported running low more often. Although mean scores were significantly better for three of the four questions then (before the divorce), this was not true for everyone in the sample. Our qualitative data indicated some of our sample felt they were worse off while married and that conditions were better now, while a few felt that conditions were bad then and now.

In general, when we examined the effect of the independent variables on responses to these questions now, we found few significant effects. Those who lived alone and those with lower informational support felt they had somewhat less than just enough money to spend on food now, while those who lived with others and those with higher informational support felt they had just enough money for food.

The major finding from testing these groupings was that the group living alone, the low income group, the low tangible support group, the low informational support group, and the households having primarily teenagers were all more likely to feel significantly less secure about food now than before divorce. This suggests that the most insecure about food are lower income, divorced mothers with low tangible and informational support, who live alone with older children.

The qualitative data indicated that about half of our interviewees were less secure about food now because of the loss of their ex-husband's income, erratic support payments, and competing bills. This insecurity was present despite the fact that 72% of this sample were employed full or part time, 76% received child support, and 20% were using food stamps (See Table 4) now. Only seven interviewees indicated that divorce had no impact on their ability to feed their family.

About 78% of our sample felt several kinds of bills competed with money available for food. The most often mentioned were utility, car insurance, and mortgage bills, and many reported having to shave food costs in order to pay other bills. Many in this sample were taking steps to stretch their food budget (buying in large quantities when on sale, using leftovers, cutting meat in meals, etc.). Similar to the urban sample studied by Campbell and Desjardins (1989), we found that these women used a variety of strategies to feed their families, including letting the children eat first to insure they get enough food. In addition, roughly half of this sample had ongoing food exchange with or food support from relatives. Exchanges with friends and neighbors were more often good will gestures that occurred infrequently than were permanent exchanges. These exchanges may be captured in the social support scale scores.

When the responses to some of our qualitative questions of those who reported they were confident about feeding their family now were compared to those who reported they were not confident now, the not confidents were less likely to be informally or formally sharing food with relatives or participating in good will exchanges with neighbors than those who were confident. The not confidents were also less likely to purchase food in large quantities, to prepare meals ahead and use leftovers, to do comparison shopping and use coupons, and to make paying for a food a higher priority than paying other bills than those who were confident.

Recommendations

- Do not assume that divorced, single mothers can depend on child support payments or a network of friends and family to help provide food for their families when local wages are minimal.
- Provide some food assistance to needy divorced, single mothers in economically depressed counties.
- Provide job training programs that can lead to better paying, skilled employment that currently under-employed, single parents can attend.
- Encourage local workfare, WIC, food banks and other emergency programs to co-sponsor or refer divorced, single parents to other local agencies that provide classes dealing with purchasing and cooking meals on a limited budget. An example is the local county Cooperative Extension office which provides the EFNEP program, Supercupboard programs, and money management programs that deal with food budgets.

Final Conclusions

For this sample, the most critical independent variables were household income (as a surrogate for human capital), household structure, and predominate type of children in the household. Both household income and predominate type of children were the primary factors that determined use of community assistance programs, except for the domestic relations office. In turn, type of experience as well as household income and predominate type of children had the most influence on attitudes toward these programs. Education and informational support affected attitudes toward workfare. Household structure and predominate type of children in the household had the most impact on educational program needs. While household structure, income, predominate type of children in the household, and social support all had some effect on food habits and security now, the event of the divorce itself with the women's subsequent decline in income produced the greatest impact on their food security. Very few in our sample felt very secure about their food situation.

Our measures of social capital (the social support scales) proved weak in the face of depressed household income, and the tangible support levels found in this sample were insufficient to counter the need for programs like Welfare, Food Stamps, and WIC. The effect of social capital only became prominent in the area of food security. Our quantitative scales revealed little effect of social support, but our qualitative data revealed that a social support network of relatives and friends could make some difference in a household's food security. Overall, our data suggested that the level of tangible and informational support found in this sample was not sufficient to counter the devastating effects of divorce on food security at any current income level.

It must be noted that many of these women did not personally feel they needed educational programs to avoid Welfare or to deal with their present personal situation. Many women interviewed used the term ' they' to represent other women or offered suggestions based on personal and past experience for the benefit of others. Very few in this sample were accustomed to correcting problems with education; rather, skills and training were the terms that meant something to most of them. This observation underscores how important it will be to describe programs designed to help divorced, single mothers become more self-sufficient in terms of the specific skills they will provide.

County officials involved in planning how block grants will assist needy county residents make the transition from Welfare to workfare will find all sections of this report helpful. However, these officials should pay particular attention to our recommendations about assistance rules and the types of programs needed by divorced, single mothers moving to workfare. The data on the types of educational programs, and critical program attributes our sample indicated were important to them now, will also be helpful in planning such educational efforts. In particular, county officials should collaborate with other community organizations that already provide such educational programs in the effort to move Welfare recipients to workfare. Our recommendation to increase economic development that provides jobs with livable wages in economically depressed counties will be difficult to address, but solving this fundamental problem is crucial if eliminating the assistance safety net is to produce positive outcomes, rather than a social and public health disaster.

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